

# JOSIE BEAN FLAT STREET



by  
HARRIET A. CHEEVER.





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JOSIE BEAN: FLAT STREET



Popular Books for Girls  
By HARRIET A. CHEEVER

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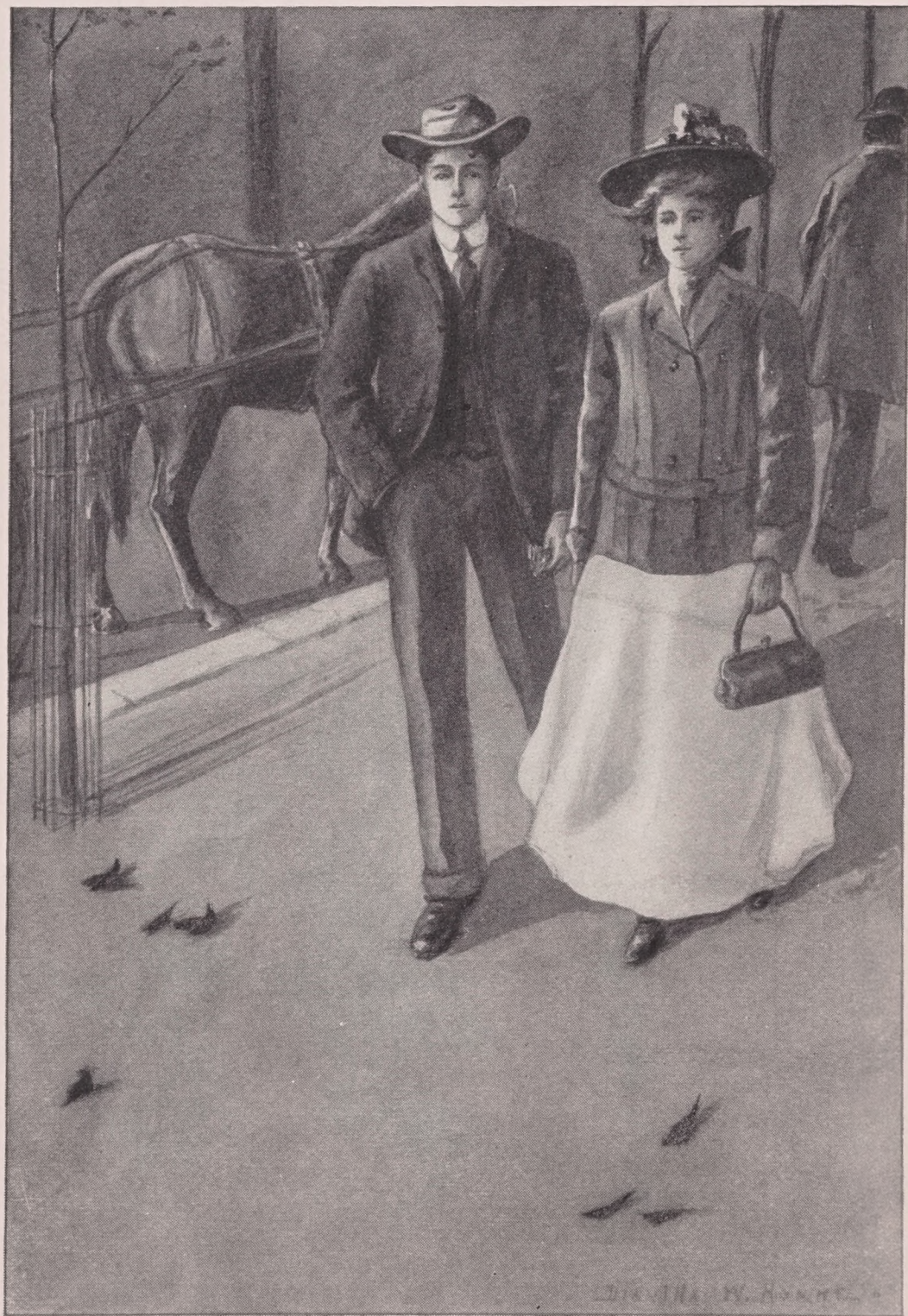
JOSIE BEAN: FLAT STREET

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“LAUGHING AND CHATTING WITH AN AIR OF GOOD  
COMRADESHIP”



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# Josie Bean: Flat Street

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By HARRIET A. CHEEVER

*Author of "Maid Sally," "Gipsy Jane," "Little Mr.  
Van Vere of China," etc.*

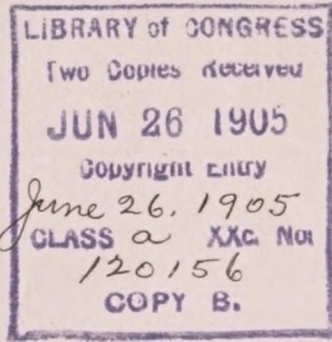
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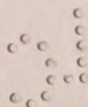


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JOSIE BEAN : FLAT STREET

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# JOSIE BEAN: FLAT STREET

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## CHAPTER I.

### HER TASTES

JOSIE was on the flat top of a broad stone post at the foot of five or six stone steps leading up to the house where she lived.

All at once a stylishly dressed young lady passed by.

“That’s it!” muttered Josie, “that’s it; yes, that’s it!”

Josie had coaxed her mother to take two rooms in the house because of the stone steps leading up to the front door. They looked grand to her childish eyes, and, although she



was but ten years old, she had an eye for everything that was beautiful or fair.

Ever since she had noticed anything with intelligence, the child had chosen things that looked well and that were nice, that is, whenever she was allowed to choose at all.

It was somewhat strange that she always seemed to know what was nice, and what, perhaps, was stranger still for so young a girl, she would beg her mother to wait before getting her a hat or a dress, until she could get what was pretty and becoming.

Josie's mother was very poor, so poor that it was all she could do to keep two rooms, one in which to cook and eat, the other in which to sew. A tailor used to send vests and coats to Mrs. Bean all cut and basted, and she would stitch them on the sewing-machine, make the buttonholes, press them, and take them back all neatly finished. So you see she was a tailoress.

Josie used to get so tired of hearing the buzz of the machine, and of pulling out bast-



ings, that she declared over and again that, if ever she worked for herself, she would do anything sooner than "finish" for a tailor.

"Then you better be thinking what you will do," her mother would reply, "for certain 'tis you won't sit 'round doing nothing, and you the very peacock for wanting fine clothes and everything to match."

Josie's mother was not actually unkind to her, but she was harsh of speech, and, as she was no scholar, and cared chiefly to get bread and butter to eat and a few clothes to wear, she always felt inclined to jeer at Josie's desire for good things. Once she let fall the remark:

"Your father was the same partic'lar body as you set up to be; always worrying as to the looks of things, and wanting them 'just so;' more's the pity that he hadn't the cash to carry out such fancy, fine ideas!"

Josie's father had been an artist, not successful, probably partly because of his poor health. And her mother had sold every pic-



ture he left except one. She only kept that because the child screamed with grief and disappointment when she said it must go like the rest.

Such an unusual kind of picture for a child to fancy so strongly: part of the interior or inside of a Dutch sitting-room. But in it, at one side, was a carved mantel, from which hung a silken scarf with fringe drooping gracefully from the edge. Josie liked to watch the fall of that fringe. She used also to study the carved figures, thinking how beautiful they were.

Then, under a vase of flowers, on a centre-table, was a square of delicate lace which hung over the edge of the table. Josie used to say that the pattern of the lace was like a cobweb. The pictured rug looked fine and costly, and pictures in thick frames on the wall set off the curious antique furniture.

No, Josie could not, would not, part with that beloved picture. The poor father, whose work was really skilful, and worth having,



had there only been friends to help him, slipped away from the world when Josie was but five years old, and now her chief remembrance was of looking at his pointed fingers, and thinking that he and her mamma ought to exchange hands.

Added to this was a faint recollection of thick hair curling at the edges, and reddish, as he sat in the sun. He used to cough, but Josie was fast forgetting that. A few things he said to her, however, had not faded from the child's memory. Perhaps the reason that she did not forget them was because they were so very few, and were said with so serious a face. And then again they were spoken slowly, very slowly, with his eyes on the child's face.

Then he was simply gone one day. And when the little child asked two or three times where he was, her mother said, snappishly:

"Oh, don't bother! I've got to get you something to eat, that's about all I can think of now. Your father's gone where he's safe



enough, and is better off than he ever was before."

After all, that was sufficient. Her father had never noticed her much, anyway. And, if he was all safe and better off than ever before, she decided, with childish prudence, not to "bother."

One thing that particularly tried and provoked Josie's mother was what she called the child's "ridiculous tastes."

Once when it became actually necessary to buy two cups, Josie was gone so long to get a couple at five cents each that her mother asked sharply on her return: "What in creation kept you so long?"

And it turned out that the child went an errand, carrying half a dozen cups and saucers to a house a quarter of a mile away, in order, besides paying her mother's ten cents, to get two very pretty cups and saucers of passably good china and having gilt bands around the edges.

"We didn't need the saucers, anyway,"



scolded her mother, "and, as to the cups, they're likely to go smash most any minute. I don't see what you was thinking of."

"I do!" said Josie, holding up an independent little chin. "I always hated those thick, old cups, and am glad they got broke. We can use the old saucers for mush, and not have all sorts on one plate, and I want a saucer like my cup. Please, ma, don't scold, I helped earn them."

"But it makes more dishes," persisted her mother.

"I wash them," insisted Josie.

That was only one instance.

Perhaps it was irritating to have her refuse to wear things which she greatly disliked. Once when her mother brought home a cheap woollen remnant, with which to make Josie a dress, the little girl looked at the figure made up of dashes of color and a mixed, wild-looking pattern, and burst into tears.

"For the land's sake, what now!" cried her mother, angrily. "Ain't I been and got



you a good warm dress, and you set to and whimper like a great baby?"

"I hate it!" cried Josie.

"What in time ails it?" asked her mother, holding up the goods showing the mass of colors and the formless figure.

"It — it looks like a railroad smash-up," sobbed Josie, "and I ain't a-going to wear it!"

Sure enough, even when her mother shook her and said she passed all patience, the child said she would wear her print dress all winter sooner than wear that awful thing.

That was more than a year ago. Mrs. Bean made some kind of a bargain with the dry-goods man, and got Josie a sensible dress of lightish brown. Since then the little girl had gone with her mother and chosen her own "dress-stuffs."

Josie was in school, but did not get along very rapidly. Every little while she had to be absent a day or two in busy seasons, for she must wash dishes and pull out bastings. Al-



ways and forever those long, stiff white threads must be pulled out. Mrs. Bean sold great wads of white thread, old bastings, at three cents a pad.

After a time Josie insisted that she ought to have the money the bastings brought. Did not she do many errands, helping carry the coats and vests to the store? And did she not spend hours pulling out those tiresome threads, even staying from school to do it at hurried times?

Her mother had to own that Josie did a good share of the work for a child, and at last said she might have the bastings money.

"You've got to buy useful things with it," she said.

"I'll buy good things," said Josie.

"If you go to wasting it on finery, you sha'n't have it," her mother replied.

"I sha'n't waste it," returned Josie, glancing at the Dutch picture.

"It's wasting it to buy things that are above you, Josie Bean."



“ Hadn’t I ought to be better than *things*? ” asked Josie.

That was a pretty sharp question for a nine-year-old, and, as Mrs. Bean did not know how best to answer, she only fell back on the old remark:

“ Oh, don’t bother! ”

Now Josie was ten. She had on remarkably good boots for so shabbily dressed a child, and a bow of black ribbon with white satin dots looked very well on her reddish hair.

Both boots and bow had been bought with bastings money. Mrs. Bean had sniffed indignantly at the purchases, but Josie didn’t care. She was perched on the flat-topped post, ashamed neither of her feet nor her head, when a dainty girl passed by. And, after sharply taking in the beautifully fitting suit, well-matched hat, and the whole general air of good taste and correct ideas, Josie had told herself three times that “ that ” was “ it! ”



## CHAPTER II.

### THE MILLINER'S STORE

TWO years passed away, and Josie was twelve years old. There was no improvement in the way of living at her home. The everlasting bastings were to be picked out, the long threads saved for selling. The tailor's garments had to be carried to the store; Josie usually going with her mother to help carry them.

"I'm just not going to keep at this much longer," Josie kept telling herself. "I know I could do something a great deal better."

It was a great pity for a child of twelve years to leave school, but the mother cared very little for books or studies, and every little while would tell Josie it was high time she



stayed at home and learned something of the tailor's trade. One day she said, sharply:

"I'm going to have you begin next week."

"I'm never going to learn it!" Josie burst out in reply. "I hate the old black things! Almost always black, no bits of color or anything to touch them up. Of course I wouldn't want men's clothes anything but black; 'twouldn't be taste, but I ain't going to pick at them forever, nor sew on them, either. I ain't dead yet, and want to see something bright while I'm alive."

Now, although Josie spoke in this way, she did not like the sound of her own words, nor the tone in which she spoke. She wished she knew how to talk in what she thought of as "a pretty way." But you see she never had been taught to express herself like a little lady. Her mother spoke in a coarse or impatient way much of the time, and children usually talk in the same tones they hear used by older people. Yet Josie disliked her own rough speech.



It was as if the child's inward or real nature was out of tune with all her surroundings and the habits she had formed. She had never forgotten the appearance of the fine young lady who slipped along Flat Street that morning when she made a figurehead for the stone post. And she had noticed other well-dressed young ladies since then, and heart and soul she grew more and more hungry for better things than she had ever had, or ever seemed likely to have.

Now that her mother had spoken again, and this time with decision, about her doing something to earn money besides pulling out the bastings, Josie all at once wondered if she could not find that "something" on her own account.

Way down in her young heart she felt sure that, should she say she was going to look for a place, her mother would reply that she would do no such thing; she herself would find a place for her, and whatever she found would have to be taken.



And her mother said, in her scolding way:

“If you’re so set against working for the tailor, well and good. Yet I do indeed think that what has been good enough for the mother should answer plenty well for the child. Just think, too, how much I could show you! Why, lots of young girls would be glad to give me their help for nothing just to learn all I could show them about sewing for a tailor. What you want to set up your will for, I can’t see, but all is, if you’re bound you won’t work on coats or vests, I’ll do my best to get you into some store as a cash-girl. I guess you’ll soon see the difference between running your legs off all day at the beck and call of a dozen orderly persons” — she meant “ordering” — “or sitting at home and being your own mistress.”

Josie replied, spunkily:

“I’m not going to be a cash-girl, so you needn’t get any such place for me, and I don’t think it’s being your own mistress to hurry



and rush the way you have to on those heavy black things."

"I'm going to get you a place right away," her mother said, snapping off a needleful of black silk, "and, when I do, you're a-goin' to go to it. Now no more sass; you're a young child, and the law makes you obey."

Oh, dear! Josie did wish her mother would speak more mildly, more as if she was a lady, and keep all that gibberish about "the law" out of her talk.

Then a distinct plan began forming in her ruddy-haired head.

After her plain dinner that day of baked potatoes, skimmed milk, and bread, Mrs. Bean started off with a great bundle for the tailor's, leaving Josie to wash the dishes and clear up. This was done very quickly, then Josie went to the mirror in the workroom, combed her hair with unusual care, put a bow of navy-blue ribbon with light blue dots on it in the midst of her fluffy locks, and put on the good boots she would insist on buying,



and the shabby brown dress she had worn nearly every day for more than a year.

Then she went out, locked the door, and hid the key in a hollow by the stone steps, and, with a half-scared but determined look, started up the street.

On the way to the tailor's, Josie had passed and repassed a great many times a large millinery establishment where goods were sold both at wholesale and retail. That is, goods were sold in large quantities to be sold again by the single piece, or they were sold in small orders to persons who wanted only a hat or a bonnet, a few yards of ribbon, or a spray of artificial flowers. Millinery goods of every description were to be found at the great store, which took in more than one story of a high building.

This place had long been Josie's chief delight and fascination, a place she never was known to pass without gazing in at the windows, and seldom passed without stopping to



admire the lovely things set forth behind the great squares of glass.

Artificial flowers looking so real that it seemed as if they must be fragrant, feathers so fine and proud she ached to handle them, ribbons so beautiful she never tired of feasting her eyes on the varying colors, trimmed hats so charming that Josie fairly dreamed of them at night, — all these fair and attractive things of the milliner's windows so allured the child that she now and then would linger before them so long that her mother would scold her when she returned from an errand for having been gone so long.

Suddenly the wild idea entered her head of trying to get into that place of richness and tastefulness, no matter what she did there. Strange she never had thought of it until the day when her mother said, with decision, that she must either help with the sewing or become a cash-girl.

But, once the idea did occur to her, it was like putting flame to a match. Josie could



think of nothing else. At first it was a mere imagination, a thought, of how lovely, oh, just lovely, it would be could she but wriggle inside those great, showy doors and stay there, hired, regularly hired. The child's cleft chin went up and up until the resolve was firmly taken that, if she was to be put to work, she would "put" herself, if possible, according to her own liking.

"It's me that's got to do the work," she told herself, "and I know ma pretty well. First thing I'll know she'll say: 'Well, miss, I've got you a place, and you're to go to-morrow.' Then there'll be an awful fuss if I say I won't go. Ma just means to get me a cash-girl's place in a big department store, and I just won't stand it."

So, having done the best she could as to her appearance, poor Josie started for the great millinery establishment.

Ah, but once inside the door, she trembled like any leaf. For, although she made up her mind on the way about what she would say,



she now thought, with confusion, how queer it would sound for her to ask to see the boss, and then say she had come to find something to do.

How busy every one was! Josie had plenty of time in which to get up courage to tell her errand, and it was several minutes before a young lady, with stylishly arranged hair and a dress beautiful to the child's eyes, stopped in front of her, and said, in rather a lofty way:

"Well, little girl, what is it you want?"

"Please, I want to see the boss," faltered Josie.

"The boss!" The young lady guessed her meaning at once.

"Did you want to see about getting work?"

"Yes'm."

"What kind of work?"

The question took Josie all aback, and the young lady did hold her head so high! It frightened Josie, so that, in her confusion, she stammered out:

"Please, I'd like to learn how to trim hats."



It wasn't what she wanted to do at all; she hadn't thought of such a thing until, scarcely knowing what to say, she really said what first popped into her mind.

The young lady smiled airily. "It would take a long time for you to learn to trim hats for *us*," she replied. "It would be better for you to pick up pins or pull out bastings for some dressmaker to begin with, and it's lucky you saw me instead of the boss."

In spite of all her determination, Josie was utterly put down. She said, "Yes'm," and at once left the store.

At the great window filled with ribbons and flowers she stopped. The trimmed hats and bonnets, the toques and turbans, were in the window on the other side of the door. But here were the things she had wanted to handle, these entrancing things that shimmered and waved, that drew her toward them at every chance.

But the haughty manner of the young milliner lady had driven a proper answer out



of her head. Poor little girl! As she stood looking through a great blur at these treasures of her dreams, it seemed to her as if her heart's light had all at once been put out. Yes, she only saw through a blur, for her eyes were filled and overrunning with tears.

"To think she really sent me back to bastings again!" she sobbed. "It was too bad! Too bad!"

Then in a moment more, childlike, she felt the rising of new hope.

"P'r'aps I'll try again," she muttered, "and ask some one else. That girl needn't have snapped me up so. Oh, but to say bastings!"

Josie shivered with the sob that escaped her as she turned away. She had been worked up and excited, and now, although she had not meant to make a sound, it was not strange that the big sob caused a little choking sigh, a sigh that could be heard.



## CHAPTER III.

### JOSIE'S PLACE

“WHY, what's the matter, little girl?”

Josie had turned around to find herself face to face with a fine, stately-looking lady, who had caught the little sob and sigh as she turned from the window.

The lady was not young, for her hair was gray, but she had a fresh face and a kind look in her dark eyes, and her voice was firm yet soft as she put her friendly question.

“I — I got hurt,” answered Josie.

“I'm sorry,” said the lady. “Did any one throw a stone at you? Some of the boys from over on Flat Street are very rude.”

“Oh, no, I didn't get hurt that way,” Josie replied, feeling encouraged by the gentle



tones; "a girl here to the milliner's didn't speak kind to me."

The lady's face changed so quickly and so completely that Josie felt almost frightened again.

"Tell me what the girl said, please, exactly what she said."

"I — I wanted to get work, so I went in and asked to see the boss." Then she repeated word for word what had passed between her and the showily dressed girl.

"It made me cry," Josie added, shyly, "because I've had to pull out bastings from coats and vests ever since I can remember, but I love pretty things dearly, dearly! I — I wanted dreadfully to get in among all these lovely flowers. I love ribbons. I've kept a bow for my hair with bastings money ever so long."

"Come in with me," said the lady. "I have a place here myself; perhaps, after all, I might find something for a willing child



to do. Are you obedient? Do you like to do as you are told?"

"I never disobey ma," Josie replied, "but I didn't want to learn tailor's work, but she wants me to get a place somewheres."

"Goodness me!" she thought, "just to think such a fine lady as this works! And here I go, after all, into the flower and ribbon store." Her heart began to sing for joy, yet the feeling uppermost was the surprise at this new turn of affairs.

"Which girl was it you spoke with?" asked the lady, as they stood in the store. "Please point her out to me."

"It was that one trying the gray bonnet on the old lady," Josie replied, "but please," she added, timidly, "I don't think she meant to sass me. I wouldn't want her made any trouble."

The lady laughed a little. "Well, no matter about that, you can follow me to one of these rear rooms."

Josie's eyes opened wide with wonder as



she entered a large, square room at the back of the store. Six women, mostly middle-aged, were so busy trimming hats or working on lace and ribbons that they only glanced up for an instant as she stood looking around. But it appeared that the tall, stately woman who had invited her in was a person of much importance in this busy-bee place. For, no sooner did she appear than one of the workers said, hastily:

“ Oh, Madame, Miss Ashley has sent word that she wants her evening bonnet carried to her to-night instead of to-morrow, because she wants to wear it to a reception this evening. What shall we do? ”

Before any reply could be made to this, another younger woman began excitedly:

“ And what am I to do, Madame? Mr. Rockson said that on no account was Mrs. Edson to be disappointed about that travelling bonnet to-morrow, but, come to look, we haven't one of those brown tips left. Miss



Gleason sold a bunch this morning without my knowing it."

"The tips should have been brought to this room as soon as the order was given and they were selected," said Madame, sternly.

"They were," said the woman, "but Miss Gleason says there was a customer wanted them so dreadfully she found the bunch in here and let her have them."

Madame's handsome face grew so severe that Josie hardly dared look at her.

"I have told every girl in this store," she said, "and Miss Gleason particularly, never to come to the workroom for anything. Please call Miss Gleason," she added, speaking to the woman who had made the complaint about the tips.

The woman laid a half-made bonnet on a long table and went out.

"As for Miss Ashley's evening bonnet," Madame said, calmly, "the second order comes very late, but I will assist, and I think



it can be got off in time. We must always accommodate when possible."

Madame motioned Josie to a stool at one end of the room, and the little girl had just seated herself when the woman who had been sent for Miss Gleason returned, and with her was the young lady who had spoken to Josie so smartly only a little while before.

"Miss Gleason," Madame began, "I understand that you came to the workroom this morning and took away and sold a bunch of brown ostrich tips. Is that so?"

Poor Miss Gleason! There was no proud tossing of her head now, as she saw Madame standing straight and unbending before her.

"Goody gracious!" thought Josie, "I'm glad I'm myself now and not that nice-looking girl."

In fact it appeared to Josie that she could actually see the rolls of hair standing high on the girl's head begin to lower a little.

"They don't really come down," Josie said to herself. "I just imagine they do."



But Miss Gleason was attempting a reply, and she tried to speak a little boldly as well:

"Why, a lady came in and was just crazy to get some little bits of brown feathers. She was so wild to find them, I peeped into the workroom, and I'm sure I didn't know the cluster I found there was sold."

"Did you not hear the order I have given more than once, that nothing whatever was to be taken from the workroom?"

Miss Gleason hesitated, then said, reluctantly: "Yes'm, I heard it, but I thought perhaps, seeing that lady was so anxious for them, it would be better to accommodate her."

"Young ladies will have to obey orders who work for *us*," said Madame, in reply. "You can return now to the counter, and please say to Mr. Rockson I would like to see him."

Josie wondered what made Madame's reply sound so familiar. Then she remembered that only a few moments before Miss Gleason



had said to her, with the same emphasis that Madame now used:

"It would take a long time for you to learn to trim hats for *us!*" "Then she sent me away," thought Josie. "Oh, I wonder if they will send her away." And at heart she felt sorry for the proud, silly girl.

Then came Mr. Rockson, a man not very tall, but with a keen eye, and an appearance that made Josie think he understood business all through and through. Madame looked troubled as she said to him:

"I am very sorry, but we cannot make Mrs. Edson's travelling bonnet as she ordered it. Miss Gleason came to the workroom, took the feathers she had selected, and sold them. We have no more —"

"How came the girl to do that?" interrupted Mr. Rockson, his brow darkening.

"She simply did it," replied Madame, with dignity. "Now the first question is, what shall we do?"

"Send word at once to Mrs. Edson to come



and select something else," Mr. Rockson replied. "There is no other way. Didn't Miss Gleason understand that goods were never to be taken from the workroom once they went in there?"

"Yes, she understood."

Nothing more was said, and Mr. Rockson disappeared on the other side of the heavy drapery before the workroom.

"I'm glad I ain't Miss Gleason," thought Josie again. "Poor thing, I'm real sorry for her."

"Have you used all of that red ribbon you want, Miss Loomis?" asked Madame.

"Yes'm."

"And all of the green?"

"Yes'm."

"And the plaid, too?"

"Yes'm."

"And are you through with the laces, Miss Blossom?"

"Yes, Madame, all through for the present."



Madame beckoned to Josie.

The child jumped from the stool so promptly that it turned half over as if about to follow her.

"What is your name?" asked Madame.

"It's Josie Bean."

"Very well, Josie. You see these blocks of ribbon on the table half-unrolled. Please roll them up. You will have to go slowly at first, as they must be rolled evenly. As they are done, Miss Loomis will show you how to fasten them at each end of the edge with little pins. Don't be nervous. There are several blocks lying around on the table; wind them all neatly, snugly, and evenly. Then I will show you how to fold the web laces over the cards."

No one spoke to Josie as she began winding the rich ribbons. "Now this is lovely!" thought the child, "but I must do exactly what I am told. Oh, I wouldn't not mind Madame for the world!"

You see she had already learned one very



important thing: that any one who was to get along in that great millinery store was first of all to obey orders.

“I reckon they have to in any business,” she thought.

A very correct idea that!

When the ribbons were at last ready to be put away, and the laces folded over the cards, Madame showed Josie where to place them, — the ribbons in a glass show-case, the laces in their right boxes.

Back in the workroom Josie soon found there was not a moment to be wasted. Madame had told the six milliners that the little girl, Josie Bean, would make herself useful in any way she could, and first it was:

“Here, Josie, put these pins in the cushion, please,” and a handful of needle-pointed pins that had been hastily thrown on the table were stuck into a great, soft pincushion. Then it was:

“Josie, run to that third drawer and hand



me out a roll of pink silk that's on top, will you?"

And she giggled with satisfaction when Miss Blossom, a youngish woman, said, as if glad of the convenience:

"Oh, come now, Josie chick, pick up that hassock over in the corner there, and sit yourself down on it right at my feet. I want to put this hat on your head and see just where to fasten this spray of roses.

"Oh, stop shaking," the woman added, pleasantly, as Josie caught a glimpse of herself in a mirror opposite, for on her head was a great picture hat designed for a large, grown lady.

"Oh, my conscience!" exclaimed Miss Loomis, looking up from a little distance off, "that's big enough to be your grandmother of a hat. Don't move, 'twould knock you over."

Josie, even at this, only showed her beautiful teeth, managing not to shake again.

"Now let's see where the veil wants to be



caught on," said Miss Blossom, and the next moment a piece of spotted lace was over her face.

Just then a boy of about sixteen, lank and droll in his very make-up, came into the room, and, seeing the shabbily dressed child on the hassock, a ponderous hat on, and a veil over her face, he said, with a comical drawl:

"Well, if you don't look like your own granny, I'll be blowed!"

"Come now, Hiram, you just get out of this," said Miss Blossom, as Josie exploded with a sudden chuckle. "You needn't be looking at what's done in here, anyway."

"Thought a cat could look at a king," drawled Hiram. "Sh'd think I might look at a great sight funnier thing." Then he gave vent to a bursting sound, as if a whole mouthful of laughter flew out of his mouth all at once.

"Now you budge!" said Miss Blossom, speaking loudly.

And Hiram budged, after first pointing a





“WELL, IF YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE YOUR OWN GRANNY,  
I'LL BE BLOWED!”







finger at Josie, then reeling forward in silent laughter, as if half-dead with amusement.

“Don’t you ever mind Hiram West,” Miss Blossom said, softly, to Josie. “He’s the biggest tease on the footstool, but he’s kind-hearted as he can be. Never let him see that you care for his teasing, and he’ll soon leave you alone.”

Then Miss Loomis came hurriedly from the outer store. “Aren’t you most through with that child?” she asked; “we’re a little short of hands outside, and Madame says she could go to the counter and sell the five and ten cent ribbons as well as anybody. Madame wants to come and work on the quillings for Miss Ashley’s bonnet.”

Madame herself appeared immediately, all ready for the quillings.

“I was just saying,” Miss Loomis began, “that, as soon as Miss Blossom got through with this Josie girl, you would like her at the narrow ribbon boxes.”



"She can go now," said Miss Blossom. "I'm all through what I wanted to arrange."

"Then come, Josie," said Madame. "I'll take a moment to show you how you'll find the prices, and how to measure the ribbons that are not done up in bunches. That hat looks fine, Miss Blossom."

"Made it easy having a head to fit it to," Miss Blossom answered, as she took the hat from Josie's head. "There, run along, child, and learn how to sell ribbon," she added, never stopping her work an instant.

Madame Leroy went with Josie behind the counter.

"I'm afraid you could scarcely reach to sell the ribbons from the glass cases," she said, "but these boxes of low-priced, narrow ribbons on the end of the counter you can manage with very easily. Now here are the five-cent ribbons, and these in the next box are the ten-cent ones. The little bunches are all five cents each. Measure the others carefully; they nearly all come out evenly as to yards



and half-yards. Try not to make mistakes. Here is a little cash-book in which to put down everything you sell. The young lady next you will send up the cash-box, and attend to making change."

"I could," said Josie.

"Very well, you can perhaps after I have a chance to show you a little more. Be careful. If you make mistakes, I shall be almost sure to know it. Sell everything as marked. Don't talk any more than is necessary. Always speak pleasantly."

Madame had a way of saying a good deal in a few words. But Josie was so very anxious to please that she not only paid attention, but tried to do exactly as she was told.



## CHAPTER IV.

### QUEER CUSTOMERS

"WHAT pretty little ribbons," said a showily dressed woman, who was fingering the different widths in a third large box. They were loose pieces to be sold as remnants, and, as usual, costing a few cents less a yard than had they been taken fresh from the blocks.

"Now how much is this?" she asked, taking on a familiar air, as she looked at the little salesgirl behind the counter.

"Ten cents a yard," said Josie; "it used to be fifteen."

"How smart you are at it," giggled the woman. "How much is there in this piece?"

Josie measured it. "A yard and a half," she said; "fifteen cents."

"Oh, come now, sis," the woman spoke in



a bland, would-be winning manner, "I'll give you ten cents for the whole piece. That's enough for it. Do it up quick now, and they'll think what a smart young seller you are. Hurry up! Time's money, you know."

But Josie did not hurry or make any movement whatever.

"The piece is fifteen cents," she said, softly.

"My! ain't you pert," exclaimed the woman, her face changing. "They won't keep you long, I can tell you! You're a little too smart for your size!"

She bounced around angrily, almost banging against the manager, Mr. Rockson.

"What is it, madame?" he asked, with a show of polite concern. "Didn't you find what was wanted?"

"Oh, yes," the woman replied; "I only didn't quite fancy being waited upon by that chit of a child over there."

Josie's face flushed painfully, and her eyes grew big with fear, as Mr. Rockson strolled up to the counter.



“What was wrong with that last customer?” he asked, his voice even, but his keen eyes fixed on Josie’s face.

The poor child’s voice trembled, as she replied:

“Madame told me to sell all the ribbons in this box for what they are marked. That woman coaxed me to sell this piece of a yard and a half, at ten cents a yard, for ten cents. She was terribly angry because I wouldn’t, but I couldn’t disobey Madame.”

The manager smiled.

“You stick right to that plan of doing precisely as you’re told,” he said, “and you’ll get along all right. Never mind the sharpers or the sharks.”

And he was gone. Josie’s heart stopped pounding, and her smile was radiant as, after that, piece after piece of ribbon was sold, and she made her little entries in the cash-book, thinking how delightful it was to know she had done just right, and to be actually handling the soft, silken ribbons.



She stayed at the counter until the great entrance doors were locked on the inside. It was closing time. People inside the store were let out as they finished their purchasing, but no one was allowed to enter.

Then Josie was asked to assist a few minutes in clearing up the workroom. Mr. Rockson, the manager, and Madame Leroy, the forewoman, were talking together. As Josie put on her plain, well-worn hat, Madame said to her:

“Our busiest season is upon us, September now, and Christmas will be here almost before we can turn around. You have done very well this afternoon, and until the end of the year we will give you three dollars a week to do anything most needed, that is, if you continue to follow orders, are willing and respectful. Do you think you will try it?”

Josie swallowed hard. “Oh, yes, it will be beautiful, beautiful! I just love this place!”



When Madame spoke of Christmas and the last of the year, it seemed to Josie's childish mind as if such times were very, very far off. Why, here were the flowers blooming just as fresh and lovely as in June. The trees and shrubs were all dressed in green, and even a late robin sang here and there among the swaying branches.

But the young eyes were blind to some things that older persons had already noticed. The leaves were not all green, some were red, some brown, some yellow. And the flowers blooming in the gardens were mostly flaming in color, either deep reds, vivid yellow, or the striped shades of dahlias and asters. All of a kind that come late and are the last to go.

But never mind, a very happy, even jubilant young person went tripping toward Flat Street, all the world looking bright to her satisfied eyes.

Once inside her mother's rooms, however, blame and quick words greeted her.



“Well, miss, I suppose you’ve had a fine time of it,” her mother began, “running off and staying until most dark! I shouldn’t ’a’ minded your going out a spell after you got cleared away, but to stay the whole living afternoon, — well, whatever has come over you?”

For Josie’s face and whole appearance were so full of something she had to tell that, in the midst of her reproaches, her mother stopped to inquire what it all meant.

“I’ve got work!” piped Josie.

“Oh, indeed,” replied her mother, not knowing what to make of this announcement. “What kind of work I should like to know?”

Then came an account of the afternoon’s doings, and the engagement that had been made.

“Oh, very well,” said her mother, “you’ve been and found a job that may last a little while and be good enough as far as it goes, but, if you’d begun for the tailors, you might have kept on as long as you pleased, besides



being able to help at housework. Who's going to help now I'd like to inquire? "

" I can," said Josie, stoutly. " I am to have an hour at noon just the same as the others at the store, and I can help then, and again at night. I'm sure, ma, I should think you'd be glad I'd gone and found something for myself, seeing I couldn't be willing to do tailor's work or be a cash-girl."

" Go eat your supper now," said Mrs. Bean, who did not think it best to praise her smart young daughter, no matter how true her words might be.

But, after her plain supper, Josie found it hard to clear away. She was so tired, poor child, that she could scarcely drag herself from the table to the closet and back again, as she must do several times. And what was unusual, she found herself craving a heartier meal than the meagre one set before her.

" I hope I'm not going to feel like this at night," she whispered to herself, " and I really wish I had a piece of meat."



She did not realize that excitement and a nervous desire to please had much to do with her fatigue, and that regular, pleasant work would soon come easier. As for the meat, that, too, she could have by a little careful management.

At the store next day, Josie found her duties were much the same as the day before. She helped a good deal in keeping things straight in the workroom, and helped the milliners by sitting as a figure, while they swiftly placed roses, perched feathers, or tried the effect of rolls and billows of lace. She also was very useful at the narrow ribbon counter.

One thing she was generously sorry to notice. Miss Gleason was not there. "They've sent her away," she murmured, a note of awe in the low tones. "What a pity that she disobeyed." At noon another young lady had slipped into the absent girl's place. There was no danger that Josie would disregard an order.

The days passed quickly and pleasantly, for



Josie was greatly in love with her work, but one thing troubled her. She began to long greatly to have a better dress than the old brown one she had worn so long. She was too much given to noticing things, and too fond of everything pretty and becoming, not to know and feel that her appearance was in strong contrast to those about her.

Madame Leroy was always handsomely dressed. The young ladies behind the counters looked beautifully to Josie's eyes, even the women in the workroom had tasteful things and always looked well dressed.

One morning, on going to the workroom, Josie found some odds and ends of ribbon which were too good, she thought, to throw away.

"What shall I do with these?" she asked Madame. "Will they do to use for anything?"

"Oh, no, you can have them," Madame replied, "and the artificial flowers over in that old box are to be thrown away. You



know where the waste hamper is, just outside in the back hall."

Josie was very early that morning. In her anxiety never to be late, she had twice been to the store when no one but the janitor and Hiram were around. Now, during a few moments of leisure, she picked away the crushed leaves from two white roses, and, with needle and thread, fastened them daintily midst glossy green leaves. These she pinned in her hair, catching them in deftly at the left side.

Next she grouped bits of white ribbon, pale greens, and pink, which she fastened to the yoke of her waist on the right side, and just below her crumpled collar.

When Madame swept into the workroom a moment afterward, she exclaimed:

"How very pretty those roses look in your hair! I think you have shown considerable taste in the way you have grouped them with the leaves. And your bow is quite taking, too. Let them stay."



"Oh," said Josie, "I only poked them in my hair for fun, and this bow, it doesn't match my dress." Then she blushed confusedly, knowing that Madame must think her dress something dreadful. "Folks will laugh at me," she added.

"No, they won't," Madame persisted. "Let them stay just as they are. You're a child yet; if you look as if we had dressed you up a little, it won't matter. The roses are small than otherwise; the bow gives you 'quite an air,' as some of our customers say of their hats."

Josie forgot both roses and ribbon knot in the busy morning that followed, but she had no idea of the attraction that the simple things lent. Her red-brown eyes were so much the color of her hair, and the red and white of her complexion went so well with both eyes and hair that the white roses and mixed bow set her off remarkably for such little things.

The day was so crowded a one that Madame asked Josie at noon if she was willing



to have lunch in the workroom, and not go home as usual.

The child thought that would be great fun, and, when she was given chicken sandwiches, doughnuts, and warm milk, all she wanted of each, she made up her mind that it would be grand if Hiram could only bring the luncheon to the workroom every day, and she enjoy a share of it.

Not having put on her hat at noon, the white roses and knot of ribbons were not disturbed. Early in the afternoon a young man strolled into the store and, getting an eye on Josie, went up to the ribbon counter, affecting to want certain shades of baby ribbons.

As Josie was showing him different bunches, he said, in a low voice:

“My dear little miss, I don’t believe you have any idea how jaunty you look with those white roses in your beautiful hair. And where does the pretty kitten live, I wonder?”

Now Josie knew almost nothing about the great, round world, and how many things



there were in it to learn. She had lived closely with her mother, who, even if sharp-spoken, was in many respects a sensible woman.

Now there was so much surprise in her bright, bronze eyes, as she looked at the young fellow, that all she did was to smile faintly, sending in the dimples always quick to show in her rosy cheeks.

"Yes, I mean it," said the make-believe customer, who was nicely dressed, wore kid gloves, and carried a slim cane. "I know the people here, and they think I'm all right, so you needn't be afraid to talk. Where does the kitty live, and who is her father, I wonder?"

"I have no father," Josie replied. "I live with my mother on Flat Street."

"And has she ever seen a play, a pretty play," persisted the fellow, "with the orchestra going, and the lights a-flashing, and everything gay as the mischief?"

It had happened that not long before this



an older girl of Flat Street had been to a play, and, in Josie's hearing, had given a glowing account of the acting, the music, and the lights. But for this, Josie would have known almost nothing of what a play meant. After this description, however, she had thought many times how much she should enjoy such a bright and new pleasure.

And here, all unexpectedly, she was being asked if she would not like to see a play.



## CHAPTER V.

### LESSONS

THE young man spoke a little more boldly when he found that Josie had no father.

“No,” she replied, “I have never been to a play, but I heard a girl telling about one once, and she said it was splendid.”

The slight excitement, always delightful to Josie, of being at the ribbon counter had lent higher color to her cheeks, in which the dimples came and went, and a fresh sparkle to her eyes, while about her forehead fell stray curly locks of bronze hair. The little white roses nestling in the thicker mass of hair were strikingly becoming, and her unaffected manner lent the charm that simplicity is always likely to add to any one's appearance.

Being tall for her age, Josie might easily



have been taken for a young girl a year or two older than she was.

“Oh, well now, we must see a play, sure,” said the young fellow, whose bright eyes Josie thought very fine. And then the way he was dressed! She was glad, too, that they knew him at the store. And to think of his noticing her, in her plain, used-up dress, with not even a pretty ruffle around her neck!

“Only a bastings girl,” thought Josie. “This is a pleasure certainly!”

Then it appeared that her new acquaintance was for making neat plans for her to follow.

“Could she put on her little hat and steal away to the play to-night? A daisy one it is going to be at the Cedar Street Theatre. We’ll be at the corner to meet her.”

“I’ll ask ma,” said innocent Josie.

At that moment a lady asked the price of some ribbon, and Josie was all attention.

The young man stood by, casting admiring glances at the child’s face, and waiting to say something more. The moment Josie was at



leisure again, he took up a piece of ribbon and pretended to be examining it, while he said with decision:

"No, no, no! she mustn't ask her mother anything about it. Isn't mother pretty stern sometimes?"

"Yes, she is," admitted Josie.

"Well, well, all she must do is to put on her hat and coat, and be at the corner of Cedar Street at half-past seven. Then the next thing, we'll be at a charming place, and after the play there'll be ice-cream and cake. Little girls all like ice-cream and cake. Here, I'll take this bunch of ribbon," he added, as Mr. Rockson wandered by.

As Josie did up the five-cent bunch of ribbon the fellow had purchased, he added a few coaxing, urgent words, and, almost before she meant to or knew it, she had consented to meet him in the evening, and go with him to see the play.

She was in a flutter of surprise, bewilderment, and delight when Madame Leroy came



up to the counter. Two ladies were buying narrow ribbons, and Madame waited until they had gone. Then she asked soberly and directly:

“Josie, what did that young man say to you who was here a minute ago?”

For the first time it shot through Josie's mind that perhaps she should not have talked with the young man as she did, or that perhaps he should not have talked to her during business hours. She flushed, and for an instant looked confused.

“I want to know exactly what he said,” Madame repeated, in her straight, strict tones.

Josie repeated every word that had been said. It was plain as daylight that she told the exact truth.

Madame Leroy looked thoughtful. “I hope,” she began, “it was not a mistake to have so young a girl come away from her mother when she might have stayed at home and worked there. Josie, no man, young or old, should ever ask any girl, especially a



very young one, to go with him anywhere without her mother's permission. It is not a good young man, it is the wrong kind of a one who will ask a young stranger to go with him to any place, and particularly in the evening."

"I won't go," said Josie, eagerly, "if I hadn't ought to."

"Did it seem right to you to say you would go with him without letting your mother know it? Tell me truly, did it?"

Josie looked perplexed. "Why, I didn't know what to say," she replied, with evident honesty. "No one ever asked me to go to a place before, and I didn't think much about ma, I was so taken up with thinking about the play. Oh, and he said he knew the people here, so it would be all right. I didn't mean to do anything wrong."

Madame could not help seeing that Josie had indeed meant to do nothing wrong. She was dazzled by the fine appearing person, the compliments, and the unexpected invita-



tion that had come suddenly, and found her too unsuspecting to see any danger, or to realize the mistake she was making.

"Very well," she said, "I think you have told me the truth, but, if you stay here, you must promise one thing."

"Oh, I will; I'll promise anything you want me to," said Josie, eagerly.

"On no account are you to go anywhere with a young man, or with one of our older girls, without your mother's permission, and if any stranger invites you anywhere when you are in the store, you are to tell me all about it."

"I will! I will!"

"We know nothing about that silly young man who talked with you. He told a falsehood when he said we did. Now to-night I want you to tell your mother all about this affair."

"Yes, I will."

"And it is not best," Madame went on, "ever to have much to say to customers, es-



pecially boys or men. Be pleasant and polite, but not talkative.”

“ I’ll do just as you say,” replied anxious Josie.

It may be well here to say that Mr. Rockson went that evening at half-past seven to the corner of Cedar Street, and, seeing the young fellow who had talked with Josie coming along, he went toward him, and suddenly taking him by the coat collar, he said:

“ See here, you young scamp, if ever I catch you in my store again talking with a strange young girl, I’ll chase you out with your own cane! Do you understand? ”

There was some muttering and sputtering, and the great overgrown boy — for he was scarcely more — was glad to wriggle away from Mr. Rockson’s strong grasp, but his collar was in no condition to go to a play or anywhere else, except his own room. And that was where he was glad enough to go and reflect on the fact that, although that pretty



young milliner girl had no father, there were other sensible, resolute people in the world who were not going to see her made a little goose of, or be led into sly actions.

And poor Josie! Such a scolding as she got on telling her mother the story. She almost wished she had not promised to tell it. So different were her mother's hard words of blame from Madame's calm yet decided talk.

Nevertheless, Josie had learned a very important lesson. So had the foolish fellow that had Mr. Rockson to deal with.

The fall was slipping by; Thanksgiving had come and gone. Leaves were scarce enough outside now, the garden flowers all gone, and the great rush and push of Christmas shopping was in full tide.

Josie, who had never had any real idea of what Christmas shopping meant until now, was full of business and pride, making herself so useful in the store that Madame one



day filled the child's heart with delight by saying:

"I really do not see how we could get along without you."

One moment she was straightening things in the workroom so the women could find the needed material without having to search the crowded table, the next she would "lend her head," as Miss Blossom called it, while the effect of some trimming on a hat was tried. Then the ribbon counter would need her attention, or it might be she sold a cheap hat, to some woman who wanted to bargain in a hurry for herself or perhaps for a child.

Meantime, Josie had been very saving of her money, and had bought a remarkably pretty dress of navy blue, with stars and anchors embroidered in crimson silk on the sleeves and the dressy little lapels of the collar. Madame Leroy had also made it easy for her to have a large, becoming hat of dark blue beaver with wide crimson satin bows.

One day when it rained pouring, and busi-



ness was slack, Madame came upon Josie, who had been putting remnants of ribbon in two large boxes. She had half-folded them, leaving out an end of each, giving the effect of huge rosettes, but arranged with a fine eye for harmony in placing the different colors.

"Why, how pretty that looks!" Madame exclaimed, in sudden surprise, and lingering a moment to admire the fanciful grouping.

"I love to touch them," Josie said, beaming with gratification. A word of praise from Madame was always a joy.

"I think we shall have to make a young milliner of you one of these days," Madame said, as she passed along.

Now, strange as it may seem, Josie felt a distinct little stab of unwillingness or shrinking when Madame spoke of her becoming a milliner.

"Why, what do I expect?" she asked herself. "What made me feel that way at what Madame said?"



Yet there it was, that feeling of unwillingness to think of herself as a milliner.

She did not stop to think it out: how pleased and satisfied she had felt when Madame praised the arrangement of the ribbons, nor did she even know that it took an artist's eye to assort colors with such unerring taste as she had shown.

One day, at the first of December, Mr. Rockson looked troubled and annoyed, and Madame Leroy was thoughtful and absorbed, as if casting about in her mind the question of what could be done as to some important matter.

A new lot of artificial flowers, ribbons, and feathers had come the day before, and the boxes stood ready to have their lovely contents displayed. Josie was carrying material that had been ordered for hats from the store to the workroom, when she heard Miss Loomis say:

"Only think what a pity! Mango is sick



and can't come. Mr. Rockson is awfully cut up about it!"

"Who is Mango?" Josie asked, in her soft, half-timid way.

"He's a decorator, a man half-French, half-English," Miss Loomis replied; "knows just how to fix up a window to make it a bower of bloom. The goods are all here waiting, but no Mango to dress the show-window with them."

"Can't they get some one else?" asked innocent Josie. "I should think almost any one could make a garden if they had all the flowers and leaves," and she laughed at her own easy-going speech.

Miss Loomis smiled. "Indeed, and there's where you're greatly mistaken," she said, knowingly. "It is one of the fine arts nowadays to arrange a show-window, and it takes one kind of an artist to do it. Then it's close upon Christmas, and not a spare decorator to be had, no matter what the house would



pay. It is a great misfortune," she added, "that Mango should give out just now."

Wherever Josie went that day, and whatever she was doing, the flowers, the ribbons, and the feathers in the closed boxes seemed to be actually calling her. In fact, if there was such a thing as being bewitched, it would seem correct to say that Josie was bewitched, and that it was those beguiling, waiting, unopened boxes that were casting the bewitching spell.

At length she made up her mind to ask a strange and desperate thing. Her fingers fairly twitched to handle those beautiful, exquisite things. When the thought first loomed dimly, she put it from her as too foolish and presuming to be allowed. But come it would, and she could not drive it away.

She kept picturing certain groupings and arrangements, and the figures grew, and the fancies took fine and graceful shapes without the least effort on her part, until a tall, impet-



uous child flew up to Madame Leroy and gasped out:

“O Madame, please might I come awful early to-morrow morning and decorate the flower window? Please, I’ve got some figures all in my mind, and, if Hiram could come with the step-ladder, and I could have a covered box for the centre, I know I could fix up something pretty. I’d cover the box with red satin, then I’d want some lace to put in rows around the edge like the Dutch picture, and I’d get the right shades of ribbon together, and know just where to peep out the feathers. Oh, please, Madame, would you and Mr. Rockson let me try?”

Madame listened in wonder to the pleading child. Never had Josie said so much all at once before. She had been timid and shy, but now the words had actually tumbled out of her mouth in her earnest, burning desire to do as she asked.

Madame actually forgot to be amused in her astonishment at Josie’s unheard-of request.



## CHAPTER VI.

### THE SHOW - WINDOW

“WHAT did you mean by the lace in the Dutch picture?” was the first question Madame asked when Josie stopped speaking.

“My father painted it,” Josie replied; “it is a picture of a ‘Dutch interior’ we call it. The fringe falls from the mantel-scarf beautifully, and I always love to watch the way the pattern of the lace looks that droops over the edge of the table. It is all lovely.”

“Then your father was an artist?” Madame asked.

“Yes’m, he painted lots of pictures, but ma sold them all except the Dutch interior.”

Madame said “Aha!” and looked as if something had been explained that she had wondered about.



“As to the window,” she went on, speaking slowly, “a child of your age has no idea how much it means to really decorate. When the great mass of ribbons, feathers, and flowers were spread out, which we should wish to have shown, you would be so bewildered as not to know where to begin, what to take first, how to proceed, in what way to dispose of half of them.”

“I’ve seen it all in my own mind,” persisted Josie, trembling at her own daring, “and I know how the window has looked ever so many times, and ma says that I can carry colors in my eye. I know how I want it to look, and, if I could have Hiram, and a box for a centrepiece, and the satin and lace I want, I could fix it lovely. I know I could.”

“Well, now, go and see what Miss Blossom wants. See, she is beckoning to you. A child not thirteen may fancy she knows how to decorate a great show-window, but to actually do it would be a very different thing,” and Madame swept coolly away.



Poor Josie, disappointed and unhappy, she only wished she could get down behind Miss Blossom's chair and have a good, hard cry.

"If she would only try me!" she kept thinking, as Madame's calm, decided words kept coming into mind.

While Josie was measuring off some stiff silk cardinal ribbon, cutting it into pieces each three-quarters of a yard in length, and thinking it was about the shade she wanted for her centrepiece, Madame Leroy was having a singular talk with Mr. Rockson.

"It seems perfectly absurd," Madame was saying, "that so young a girl should have fixed ideas about such a thing as artistic decoration. But here we are with no one but our own hands to do anything, and as sure as three or four different ones begin to rig up a show-window, they will make a muddle that will be something dreadful to look upon.

"The child has a fine touch at things beyond a doubt. Her father, it appears, was an artist, a painter, and she has it in her to



make things look very pleasingly. She puts a flower in her hair, and it is perched perfectly. She groups ribbons in a box in a way to at once attract attention."

Mr. Rockson's keen eyes drew up in an amused smile, as if a whimsical idea had suddenly taken possession of him.

"Suppose we make an experiment of necessity," he said. "Put Mam'selle Josie in the window to-morrow morning, with Hiram, the step-ladder, and samples of our choice array of Christmas finery, ribbons, posies, and plumes. We can add a small packing-box to turn over and cover with satin, and let her have the lace she wants. A sheet can be put before the window, as she cannot work in the night, as men do. Then let mam'selle have all day if she wants it to do her fanciful decorating. She may surprise us.

"I'll telephone Simms," he added, "to come immediately with a box of evergreens, and cover the corners and chandelier and such spaces as he thinks best, leaving enough



for mam'selle to cover the floor with the last thing. I'll give orders to have the window cleared and cleaned at once."

In a few moments, Hiram, the janitor, and Mr. Rockson himself were at work removing everything from the principal show-window, and a vigorous cleaning and polishing of glass was soon begun.

Josie, going to and fro, saw the beginning of the change, and said to herself:

"They have got a decorator, after all. Well, I'll just study over what he does, and perhaps sometime I can dress up a window, if I can't now."

A grand trait that: holding on to a purpose as Josie did, but she little dreamed of the great joy in store for her.

The window was scarcely cleaned when a man came in, carrying a large wooden box, which he put down near the show-window. Then it was not long before some corner posts, the chandelier, and portions of the sides of the window were prettily decked with fresh,



curly evergreen. The sweet smell of the green creeper was all through the store, as Madame Leroy called Josie to her. Madame spoke with her usual crispness:

“To-morrow, Josie, we are going to let you decorate the window according to your own idea. Come early. Hiram will be at your service as long as you want him. The window will be screened from sight by a white cloth at the front, and by strips of paper on the inside leaves, as you will not want customers to see you at work. You need not feel nervous, hurried, or afraid. If we are not satisfied, no harm will have been done. I think the box in which the evergreens came will do for your centrepiece. You shall have the red satin you want, also both web and edge lace. That is all. Follow your own plan, and I shall expect that you will do well.”

Josie was in a dream all the rest of the day. Her face simply would not stay straight. She dimpled so continually that even Miss



Loomis, the "crack" trimmer, said, with a hasty glance at her face:

"I do declare, Santa Claus must have written you a letter, saying he was going to bring you a big bag of gold."

"It's something better than that," smiled Josie.

"Lauk 'a' mercy on me!" croaked Hiram, who had just received his own instructions. "She and me is goin' to rig up the old ship amazin', spar, deck, and hull, all that lies for'ards in the windy-show. You'll never know the place to-morrow; banners, streamers, and billers o' flowers will be ours — will be ours!"

Josie cared never a flip for the boy's banter, but went home, not to close her eyes until midnight, because of the pictures that rose before her eyes. Pictures in which she saw the show-window looking just as she wanted it to look on the morrow.

Silently, slowly, but steadily, the young girl went to work the next morning. Hiram, see-



ing her mood, and understanding that she wanted to think of what she was about, quitted all teasing and did exactly as she directed.

Nor was it long before Hiram came to the conclusion that Josie was working out a plan that was clearly in her mind at the outset. To his surprise, she went about the centre-piece first; that was her objective or chief point. Working out and up from that, she carried out her pattern, and a surprising one it was.

Shortly before three o'clock in the afternoon, Josie stepped out from the window, Hiram, with the step-ladder, having emerged an hour earlier. Then for half an hour the child worked on the floor of the window. At the end of that time all the screens were removed, and Josie announced to Madame that her window was complete.

"I must see it from the outside first," said Madame.

She slipped on her cloak and hat, and Mr.



Rockson also put on his coat and hat, and they stepped outside.

“It is wonderful! Yes, wonderful, truly wonderful!”

Mr. Rockson repeated himself, not noticing how he expressed his surprise and approbation.

Madame Leroy stood gazing in mute surprise. The great window was like a festive bower, a bower that might have been trimmed by the Christmas pixies themselves. When Madame spoke, it was in her usual deliberate manner, saying but a few words, yet those few holding a good deal of meaning:

“I call that a picture without a flaw.”

They soon found themselves the centre of a crowd that had gathered about the window, and also found it amusing to listen to the comments of people who had stopped to gaze.

“I’ll bet there’s dollars in that trick o’ display,” said a smart-looking young fellow to a friend. “I know something about how



much it costs to scrump up a show-window in that fashion."

Then, from a fashionably dressed woman to a younger companion:

"Now did you ever see things arranged more cutely in your life! I call that skill."

And cutely arranged they were. Josie had shown the outcropping of the genuine artist in the way she had blended, matched, and contrasted, while showing the different goods to the best advantage.

The centrepiece, resembling a small table, was covered with crimson satin of just the right shade. Deep white lace edgings were caught on straight to the satin, showing the handsome patterns, being fulled only at the corners. The whole design or plan radiated out from the grand central figure. Blocks of ribbon in pyramids were built on it, the ends being carried across to the corners, then gathered and fastened against the evergreen, giving the effect of rows of fluted pillars of mixed and gorgeous sheen.



Yet they were matched in shades of three, as red, white, and blue; pink, yellow, and green; violet, white, and amber.

There were also folds of web lace rising from just back of the centrepiece to the chandelier, and brought together by clumps of feathers in nearly every color of the rainbow, while flowers in sprays and garlands crossed the cascades of ribbons and plumed lace, and flowers with their leaves were clumped about in spaces on the table, and above it at the edges of the hanging lace, giving the whole central figure the effect of a huge rosette.

In each corner on the floor was a rosette of narrow ribbons, feather tips, and small flowers, while along the floor, which was covered with evergreen, bright flowers were strewn with careless, unstudied grace.

Few persons passed without stopping to admire the rare display, and trade was brisk, as many were lured into the great store, there to find that prices were set to accommodate both large and small purses.



## CHAPTER VII.

### PAPA'S ADVICE

JOSIE was carefully sorting ribbons and feathers she found in the workroom, when Madame Leroy appeared. The girl's face was so full of anxious questioning that the kind-hearted woman hastened to say:

"You have done well, Josie, very, very well, and will receive extra payment for your day's work."

"Oh, but I don't want any extra pay if only you and Mr. Rockson are satisfied," said Josie, her face flushing with pleasure at Madame's praises. "I liked it better than anything I ever did before," she added, "and I'd decorate for nothing any time you wanted me to."

Madame laughed. "We don't have work



of that kind done very often," she replied; "neither should we allow you to do it without pay."

Then Madame asked, suddenly:

"Do you save any of your money, Josie?"

"Oh, yes'm. I take it all home to ma, and what I don't have to buy me things with, she keeps in a china mug way up high in the closet. I've got five dollars saved, but I buy my clothes, and I have to have more meat since I worked."

"That is very nice," Madame said. "It is much better not to spend all the money you receive, if some of it can be saved."

Madame had secretly hoped that Josie's mother did not insist on using a great part of what the child earned, and was glad to find that she did not. Then, to Josie's surprise, she added:

"At the first of the year we intend to begin paying you five dollars a week, as we consider it is fully earned. You are able to help now in various ways both in the store and the work-



room, besides selling more and more at the counters, as well as a hat or a bonnet occasionally."

Of course, Josie was delighted at the prospect of this rise in her fortunes.

As Christmas approached, she was surprised to find how many things were bought at the milliner's to be used in the manufacture of Christmas presents.

Ribbons of every grade and hue were sold by blocks, or reeled off by yards, to be used on fancy aprons, bags of nearly every description, in dressing dolls, ornamenting sofa pillows, decking work-baskets and toilet articles, in making no end of fancy knots for neckwear both for people and for bottles, and also for pet dogs and pussies.

A very busy, very willing, a happy, and a pretty young creature was Josie these days. And yet, down in her heart was a growing feeling of discontent. She was far too quick and too bright not to learn a good deal in this brisk, new life. So she began to grow



more and more out of tune with her past life and the way that she had lived. She dreaded to think of Flat Street. The people of the precinct, coarse, ignorant, and untidy, had never pleased her. Now she began wishing that her mother could live in a different neighborhood. But she knew she must be patient.

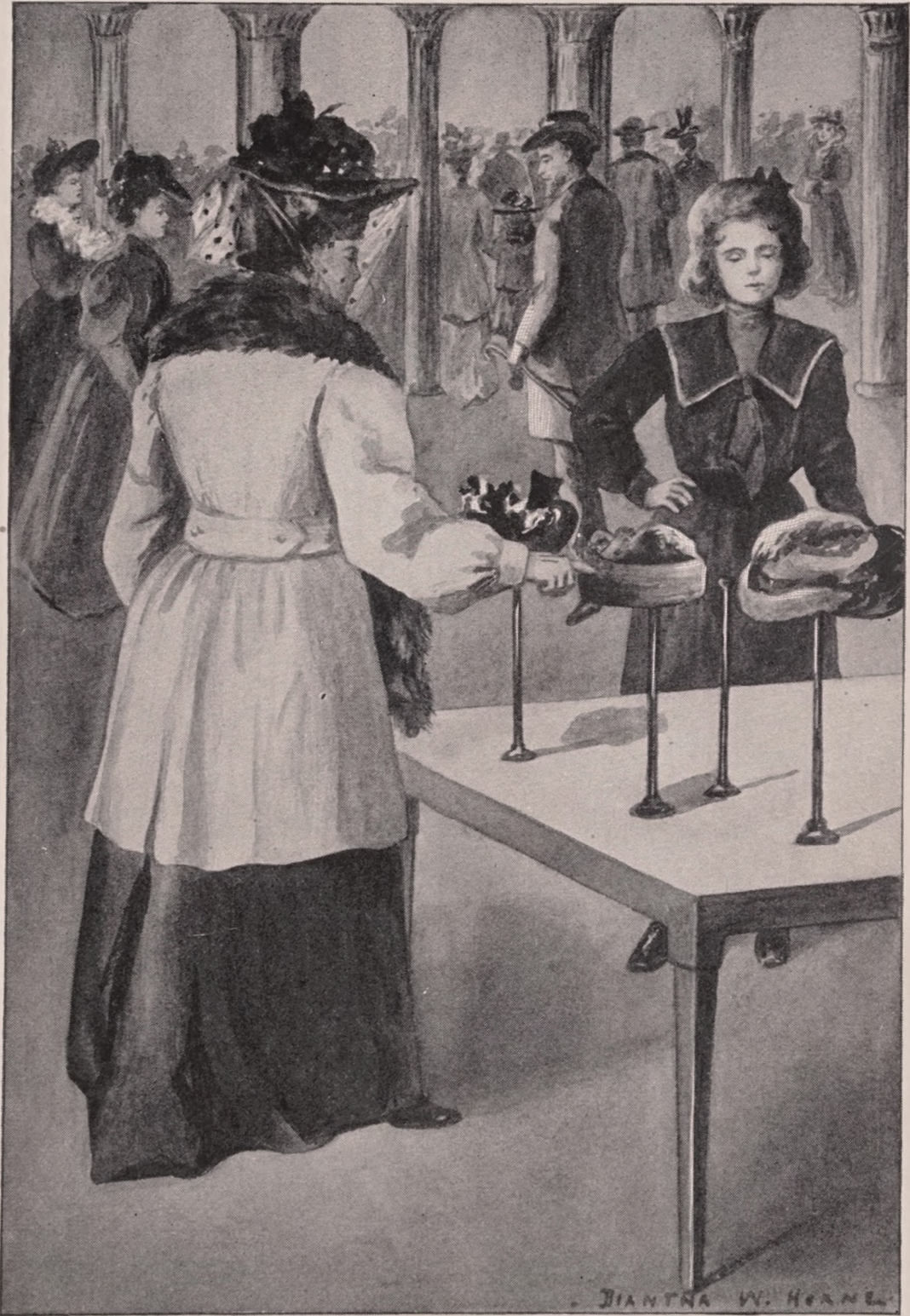
One day, a large, flashily dressed woman, red-faced and loud-voiced, came into the store, and went up to a square table on which were several stands holding trimmed hats and bonnets.

Every one else was so busy that the woman, who seemed puffed up with importance, appeared glad to have Josie ask if there was anything she could show her.

Pointing to a tasteful, beautifully made hat of light brown velvet, with rich plumes shading from a golden brown almost to a seal tint, she asked:

“What will they take for a hat like that, sis, do you know?”





“‘WHAT WILL THEY TAKE FOR A HAT LIKE THAT, SIS,  
DO YOU KNOW?’”







"It is fifteen dollars," Josie replied.

"Oh, you go 'long," said the woman, airily.

"I guess 't isn't worth any such price as that."

"Yes, it really is," said Josie, politely.

"It was seventeen dollars yesterday, but they marked it down this morning. The material is all the best. I think it's lovely."

"Yes, it does look tol'able fine," the woman admitted, "but, if I bought it, I s'pose the feathers could be changed or fixed to suit me."

"Y-e-s," said Josie, reluctantly, "but it is so beautiful and everything matches so perfectly, don't you think it would be too bad to alter it?"

"Oh, don't tell me!" exclaimed the woman, rudely, as she pulled off her kid gloves, showing thick fingers loaded with jewelled rings. "I've bought fancy hats long before ever you saw daylight, and know what's what by this time. Now, if I bought this," — she was twirling the hat around and around, — "I



should have some of those vari'gated feathers pushed up and some green ones mixed in."

"Green?" gasped Josie.

"Yes'm, green! I've got a brown silk and a green silk I'm wearing this winter, and I calc'late to wear the hat with either gown and have it match. Have you got any green feathers? Pretty good ones I want."

"Yes, I'll show you some," said Josie, feeling as if it was going to be almost a sin to spoil that exquisite hat by putting green feathers on the brown.

"How hideous it will be," thought the child.

But in a moment she was holding up bunches of green feathers, beautiful of themselves, yet spoiling the rich shades of brown to her artistic eyes.

"Now, s'pose you see what it'll cost to have this clump tucked on," said the woman, handing Josie a tuft of the green shaded feathers.

There were actual groans in the workroom when Josie appeared, the brown velvet hat



and green plumes in hand, asking what it would cost to mix them.

"Tell her it will cost a pang and a snicker and almost a fit," said Miss Loomis, looking ruefully at the beautiful hat she had fashioned with much care and skill.

But customers must be pleased, no matter how ridiculous their requirements, and so Josie was told what the extra trimmings would cost.

"She isn't a-goin' for to have the green bobbies scrumped right on along o' the others, is she?" asked Hiram, who was almost sure to appear just as some queer or absurd thing or other happened to come up.

"Yes, she is," said Josie, nodding and smiling, as if enjoying Hiram's disgust.

"Cracky!" cried the boy. "Ask her why she doesn't have some red pinks and 'Merican Beauty roses, and a pot or two o' yellow chrysanth'ums stuck on —"

But Josie had passed through the portières, and was immediately talking with the woman.



The order was given and her customer departed.

Then a much younger woman appeared. She, too, was showily dressed, and had the air of a person who cared more for things that glittered and shone than for what was choice.

A great hat on a form at the back of the store took her eye. It was covered with lace and a mixture of flowers. Miss Blossom had laughed when the hat was trimmed, saying she had used on it odds and ends all well matched as to loudness, and was meant for my Lady Highfly. The lace was coarse and the flowers enormous.

The girl haggled for some time over the price, but finally bought the hat.

“Why don’t you —

“Have a little bonnet,  
With a flower-garden on it?”

hummed Hiram, as he strolled by where Josie stood watching the satisfied young woman as she bore away her gorgeous prize.



But these were one kind of customers, and there were many others. Ladies came who were so hard to suit that Josie, who sold various things during these crowded days, wondered if they would ever find what they wanted. She wondered if others really knew what they did want. And still again, there were those who, after examining about everything in sight, and asking for prices and numerous samples, went away buying never a penny's worth, nor did they return.

Josie, however, was quick to notice some things. It was the well-dressed ladies, who spoke correctly, whose gloves fitted beautifully, and who appeared as if used to the best of things, that liked fine yet quiet goods, must match with exactness the colors they brought to match, and who wanted tasteful, becoming, but never overtrimmed hats or bonnets.

These, too, were the ladies who spoke as politely to her, Josie Bean, as they would to



Madame Leroy, or to one of their own children.

One afternoon, late, and near closing time, Madame found Josie perched on a stool at the back of the store, looking so dejected that she asked, kindly:

“What is it? Has anything gone wrong?”

“N-o,” said Josie, not smiling, “only I wish I could be like some folks.”

“What folks? Those who appear to have a good deal of money?”

“No, not those at all,” said Josie, shaking her head in denial, “but I was thinking that — that —” she paused in confusion.

“Go right on,” Madame said, with an encouraging smile. “You were thinking what?”

“That folks were just like pictures,” Josie blurted out. “Some are fine in all there is of them, others are horrid. I love a picture full of nice things, nothing out of color, or common, or mean; but I hate flaunty things, all daubs and mixed shades. Folks are that



way, too. Some are all made up of fine, delicate ways, like nice tints, will have things to match, and are made fine. I *wish* I'd been born a lady!"

Just for a minute, Josie plunged her face in her hands, and gave a good, round sob. She was tired, poor child, but, after all, that was not what ailed her, although she would not so soon have given way had she not been tired.

Truth was, she had nearly all her short life, as has already been shown, been out of keeping with her circumstances and surroundings, and the more she saw of the right kind of people, the more she felt it.

Madame understood. In her crisp, decided way, she said a few sensible words that were to help the young girl more than she imagined.

"Now, Josie," she began, "I want to tell you one thing. Probably you do not know it, but there is a fine part in your nature that makes you like fine things, and shrink from



what is coarse or common. The fact that your father was an artist has something to do with it. You cannot help liking the nice things, or disliking what is out of keeping with the best appearance both of people and the clothes they wear. It is born in you. And to some extent it is a good thing.

“But listen: be patient with every one, with the people of queer tastes and queer ideas, yet be determined to have everything of your own just as tasteful, as proper, and as attractive as you can. That means manners, speech, dress, and all that belongs to you personally, or has to do with just you yourself.”

“But I live in such a mean place,” said Josie.

“Never mind that, child, only try one of these days to live in a better place.”

Josie all at once looked at Madame so strangely, so intently, and with so much in her eyes, that Madame asked:

“What is it? There is something in your mind you want to say. You can trust me.”



Josie raised her eyes without lifting her drooped head, and almost whispered:

"I wish ma was different."

That was hard. Madame looked puzzled. And puzzled she felt how best to answer. That a child should be ashamed of her own mother was pitiful. That she should have just cause for feeling ashamed of her was still more to be deplored. Quiet people, however, are often wise. Those who think before they speak are likely at last to say the right thing. Madame began gently and thoughtfully:

"Try, Josie, never to be ashamed of your mother. It is a great mistake for any child or woman, boy or man, to be ashamed of a respectable parent, and your mother is respectable, I have no doubt."

"Oh, yes, ma is respectable," Josie admitted, but her face was still sober and downcast.

"I am sorry you feel as you do," Madame went on, "and I am going to speak plainly. It seems to me right that I should. I feel it



within me that you are going to get on in the world, and I hope you will. Now, try to raise your mother up if you can, but never, never be ashamed to speak of her, to own her, or to let people know just who she is. Believe me, Josie, you will gain far more respect from right-minded people by always being staunch and true to your mother than you ever would by trying to set her aside, or what we call ignoring her."

Josie, who was drinking in every word she heard, began picking at a thread in her sleeve, and almost whimpered, as she replied:

"But I do so like the fine ladies with soft, lovely voices, that speak to me as if I was a little nice, too. I don't ever mean to be unkind about ma, but I wish we belonged to other kinds of folks — Madame Leroy," she said, suddenly, interrupting her own speech, "what do you s'pose makes me want and like these things? Ma doesn't."

"Oh, we can't always explain the differences that exist in people," Madame replied,



judiciously. "You know what I have just said as to your having your father's tastes to some extent. Your mother has probably had a hard time, remember. She has had to earn her own living and take care of her little girl for several years. Her mind has had to be filled with what we call the great bread-and-butter question, and there doubtless has not been much time to think of anything else."

"That doesn't make any difference," sagely returned Josie. "If ma was one of the soft-speaking kind, she'd speak low even if she was poor and worked. She speaks loud and rough to me, and I answer rude to her, but I hate it."

Madame smiled. "Don't you think, Josie," she said, putting her head a little one side and looking cornerwise at the young girl in a cheery way, "that, if you always spoke in a proper, ladylike way to your mother, she would soon begin to speak in that way herself?"

"No, I don't," said Josie, bluntly but hon-



estly. "I think she would just laugh at me, and scold at what she would call my fancy-fine airs. I know she would!"

Madame sighed. "I wish you would try it," she said.

"Yes, I will, I'll try it," Josie replied, with a hopeless air.

Madame added a few more words: "I think it is perhaps my duty to advise and encourage you to do the very best for yourself you possibly can. You are very young as yet, a mere child, and life is nearly all before you. Climb upward, as far as you can. It is unfortunate that you cannot go to school, but that being out of the question, do your best, both at home and in the store, and you will find that, wherever one is determined to get up higher in life, they are likely to succeed. Perhaps you will feel better for having had this little talk."

"Yes, I shall," said Josie, brightening. "And I'll be good to ma, and try to get her up, too."



Then, as if a memory was slowly struggling to come into the light, she said, dreamily:

"I remember now that my papa told me once to do the best I could for myself, for I would have to if ever I wanted to get up in the world. Yes, papa did, he told me that."

"Then follow papa's advice," said Madame.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### AN INVITATION

“HOW very prettily this table is arranged. It is really quite a pleasure to look at it.”

A handsomely dressed, fine-looking lady stood beside a table which Josie had jauntily decked early in the morning.

The arrangement was simple enough, yet there was something in its very simplicity to render it attractive. Some of the loose evergreens left from the window trimmings were laid on the table and twined around the white hat-stands. Pieces of narrow ribbon were banded around the stands, between the rows of evergreen, and tied in natty little bows.

Then artificial flowers, all in bright tints, peeped at spaces from the green carpet on the table, while mere ends of ribbons were



squeezed together, tied in the centre with invisible strings, and stuck, ends up, here, there, and everywhere.

It was a mimic garden of bright colors, creepers, and climbers, tasteful and cheery on the cold and cheerless day.

The lady who had seemed forced to speak of the blooming table had been buying several blocks of ribbons of different colors. Her rich dress and easy manner of buying showed Madame Leroy, who happened to have waited upon her, that she had money to spend freely either for wants or wishes. And, in fact, Madame knew her for a good and desirable customer.

With all her ease and good looks, however, there had been an anxious look to the lady's face until at sight of the pleasing table her face had brightened. "Some one who has the right eye and the right touch did that," she added.

"Yes," said Madame, "we have with us a very young girl at present, who has the knack



of giving the right effect to nearly everything she touches. It is surprising, but she actually dressed up our Christmas window this year. The one with the small goods in it."

"Why!" exclaimed the lady, "is it possible? I took a long look at the window before I came in, and thought how beautifully it looked. A very young girl, did you say?"

"Yes, she is not yet quite in her teens. But she is tall for her age and might be taken for an older child. There she stands over by that counter."

The lady looked attentively at Josie a moment or two.

"She is very pretty," she remarked, "and what a distinct style there is about her. She is going to be beautiful."

"Yes, her father was an artist, and it is plain to see she inherits his fine eye and 'sense of fitness,' as we sometimes call it. Poor Josie," Madame added, "she is beginning to long for things that are way up beyond her reach."



"I suppose she is poor," said the lady, rather carelessly, as she went about other purchases. Then, her errands done, she went away.

It happened that Josie was standing near one of the windows when the coachman, who had been walking his horses up and down, not to keep them standing in the keen air, dashed up to the curb before the store, and the richly dressed lady got into the carriage.

She stopped to give an order first, however, and Josie got a glimpse of her face. In that instant she noticed how attractively her thick hair was lowered a little to one side, then rolled away in a glossy coil.

"I wish, when I get older, I could roll my hair away just like that," thought beauty-loving Josie.

But there was little time for dreaming. Christmas was barely a week distant, and the store was filled with eager customers from opening to closing hours.

When Josie had been handed her pay at



the end of the previous week, what was her surprise to find a crisp ten-dollar bill added to the usual sum.

"It is partly a Christmas gift," Madame explained, smiling at the young girl's amazed face, "but chiefly for decorating the show-window as tastefully as you did. Perhaps, too, you will want to give your mother a little Christmas present."

"Yes, I shall want to," said Josie, recovering herself and grasping at the idea. At the same time she was touching gingerly the great bill as if it was a strange, rare thing. It was the largest one she had ever owned, and but very few of its value had she ever seen.

For some reason, she got Mr. Rockson to change it before she went home. Then into the china mug and the closet went most of it, and Josie reflected that she scarcely would have trusted it even there, were it not for the fact that she slept in the room where the closet was.



A couple of days after she had watched the lady drive grandly away in her carriage, Josie was on the hassock before Miss Loomis, while that lady perched some marabou feathers on an evening bonnet, when Hiram's spare form came through the portière.

"If you please, Mistress Model," he began, "there's a lady out in the store wants to see you right away. Quick now, she's one o' the qual'ty!"

"Me?" inquired Josie. "You sure 'twas me?"

"Well, she wants to see our window decorator. I reckon that's 'me?'" And Hiram mimicked Josie's surprised voice with droll exactness.

"You'd better go and see who it is and what she wants," said Miss Loomis. "You know how little use it is to pay much attention to that young scalawag."

"Well, I like that!" piped Hiram, in an injured tone. "Now I won't direct Mistress



Model a single step. She can go and find who wants her all by her lonesome — ”

Josie, with her swift habit of obedience, was already out of hearing and in the outer room. There, seeing the lady waiting by her decorated table, and looking toward the work-room, she went up to her.

“ Did you wish to see me? ” she asked, timidly.

“ Yes, if you are the young girl who dressed up this table and the window.”

“ Yes, I did,” and Josie flushed a rosy red.

“ I don’t know but what I should have seen the manager before speaking to you,” the lady went on, “ but the truth is, my young people are to have a Christmas tree and a little dance on Christmas eve, and I’ve been worrying about the arrangement of the tree. A woman, whom I have been accustomed to calling on for assistance at the holidays and on extra occasions, has left the city, and my daughters are too much taken up with other things to



want to do anything about ornamenting the tree.

"I shouldn't feel so particular about the matter only for the little party, yet I know the young people will want everything to look properly arranged when they and their friends exchange gifts. Could you come and dress up the tree for us? I will pay you, of course."

"Oh, I'm afraid not," said Josie, "unless I could do it late in the evening." Her eyes took on a longing look as she added: "We sha'n't have a minute to spare before Christmas in the daytime, I know, or early in the evening, but I should love to do it dearly."

"Wouldn't you be too tired after your day's work?" asked the lady, kindly.

"No, if I was ever so tired, I should like to do that. I saw a Christmas tree at our chapel last year and it was beautiful, only —"

Josie stopped, in sudden confusion.

"Only what?" asked the lady, encouragingly.



"It was out of line," said Josie, smiling and showing deep dimples. "They had too much loaded on at the top and spoiled its shape. It didn't taper right."

"You mean what we call its 'symmetry' was spoiled," and the lady smiled in turn; "it was out of proportion."

"Yes, that is just exactly what I meant," said Josie, "only I didn't know exactly how to say it. And they looped the pop-corn lower than the tinsel, and the tinsel ought to been lowest because 'twas the darkest and the heaviest. Don't you think so?"

"Yes, I think you must be right. I see you have the correct idea about these things. I wish very much I could have your assistance the day before Christmas, if it is possible."

"I'll ask Madame Leroy," said Josie, "but I know how awfully busy we shall be all these days. I help in lots of ways and like to, and I wouldn't displease Madame for anything, but I must, must do that beautiful work on the tree somehow."



The pretty lady laughed at the child's determination, then the anxious look came back to her face. "Dear me," she said, "it would make things so much easier if the young people were only more simple in their demands. Now suppose you find this Madame, and see what can be done."

As Josie expected, Madame Leroy said she could not think of sparing any one from the store the day before Christmas. It was also their intention to keep open in the evening. She went up to where the lady was standing.

"We might spare her on Christmas eve itself," smiled Madame, "as trade falls off toward evening, because so many people have a tree on Christmas eve, but I see no way of sparing Josie before."

"Then I must give her up," said the lady, half-turning away.

"Oh, Madame," entreated Josie, trembling between her longing to do the beautiful work of dressing the tree and fear of giving displeasure, "don't you think I could go at eight



o'clock the night before Christmas eve? I'd rather sit up all night than not trim the tree."

"But that wouldn't do at all, my dear," objected the lady, as she looked admiringly at Josie's flushed face and wide-open bronze eyes. "A child should have her sleep, and you couldn't work until late at night, then go to work again early in the morning."

"I could for once," argued Josie. "And do you think, Madame, I might have an extra hour off in the evening, and half an hour in the morning? Then I am sure I could manage nicely."

And Madame, thinking it might be of advantage to the tasteful child to indulge her, consented to allow her the extra time.

Josie's eyes were like stars as she said: "I'll work hard enough to make up the time. See if I don't," and she smiled so happily that Madame was glad she had gratified her. But the lady lingered:

"I think," she said, addressing Madame, "that you made the remark a moment ago



that Miss Josie could be spared on Christmas eve without inconvenience. It seems to me that, if she dresses the tree for us, it would be only fair that she should come and assist in taking the things from it. Have you ever been to a Christmas eve party, my dear?"

"No, never!" The child fairly panted with expectation.

"I think Christmas is a time to make every one as happy as possible," continued the lady, "so if it would be a pleasure to you to come and help take the presents from the tree, I would like to have you. Then, also, things can probably be taken down without spoiling the looks of the tree. We usually keep it standing until after New Year's. There will be dancing which you may enjoy seeing. Now I will look for you the night before Christmas eve, and Thomas, our coachman, will see that you get home safely."

So it was all charmingly arranged, and Josie forgot to thank Madame for her kindness in the great delight she felt at the pros-



pect of what was before her. She fluttered into the workroom with so joyous an expression that Hiram, who was still there, said, in a tone of stifled amazement:

“Great Cæsar’s ghost! What’s got the model? Gone loony, I verily believe, and flying around here like a hen with her head a-missing.”

At noon, Madame stopped Josie with an air of having something to say.

“What have you to wear to the Christmas party?” she asked, pleasantly.

Josie looked blank. It had not occurred to her until that moment that the only presentable dress she owned was the one she had on. Poor child, her voice fell as she answered: “Nothing but this,” and she glanced ruefully at the woollen dress of navy blue, which, pretty and suitable enough for every-day wear, was no kind of a dress to wear to a fine party.

“You needn’t look so downcast about it,” said Madame, cheerily. “I’d have another.”



Josie brightened. So used had she become to making the least of everything do that it never popped into her head for an instant that another dress could be forthcoming.

"Want a little advice?" smiled Madame.

"Yes, oh, yes, please do," Josie answered, scarcely noticing how she expressed herself in the relief that had suddenly dawned.

"You needn't spend much," Madame began. "But suppose you take a portion of the extra money on hand and buy a simple white dress. Swiss muslin is the best thing. You will need a coarser muslin for an underskirt, besides a white cotton one, which you may have, and a few ribbons for trimming. I will see that you have two nice white roses with leaves around them, one for your hair and one for your neck. You know we have some that are quite natural.

"Have elbow sleeves and the waist cut a little low and rounding at the neck. This will be a useful dress when summer comes,



and it does up beautifully. Your mother could manage to have it cut, couldn't she?"

"Oh, yes, she could. There's a dressmaker ma often makes buttonholes for; she'll fit it and ma can make it. I wish —"

"What do you wish, Josie? out with it."

"I wish some one here could go with me when I get the stuff."

"I think Miss Blossom is going to do a little shopping to-morrow at noon, and would be very willing to help you."

"Then I'll ask her. She said once she must do something for me for being such a patient figure when she wanted to try on hats. I don't want any help because of that, but I wish she could go with me."

And, when Josie shyly asked her, Miss Blossom said she should be very glad to help her choose the pretty muslins.



## CHAPTER IX.

### LITTLE DAFFY

MRS. JASPER CORNING

*58 Wilton Terrace*

“HERE is a card that the lady of the Christmas tree sent by her coachman,” Madame said to Josie the next morning. “In her anxiety yesterday she forgot to leave her address.”

Josie took the bit of pasteboard with a pleased, childish grin. It was the first calling card she had ever handled. It was like the one pictured above.

She knew the way to Wilton Terrace. She



had once carried a white brocaded vest there for a young man who had wished to have it sent as soon as finished.

"That's up among the big houses," she said to Madame; "it will seem funny to go into one. Madame," she asked, in a kind of confidential outburst, the result of wanting a little information, "ought I to sit down on one of the fine chairs, or to stay standing up?"

Madame Leroy did not smile.

"Sit down the same as you would anywhere," she said, in a matter-of-fact tone. "Try to appear as if you had seen fine things before, and as if it was not your first party at all. You want to be just as easy and natural as possible. You know it is easy to look at things and notice them without really staring. I am not afraid you will put yourself forward too much; it is always a mistake to do that. Don't get confused. Attend to handing things down from the tree, and keep calm as you can. No doubt the people will be kind, and all will glide along nicely."



"Just think, I am to see them dance," said Josie, her smile wide and her dimples deep.

At that moment, Madame was called away, and Josie, holding the precious card in her pointed fingers, went to the workroom. At noon she was to go with Miss Blossom and select her dress. It was to be made in great haste, as Christmas was only three days distant.

Mrs. Bean had been half-pleased and half-cross when Josie told what she had been asked to do, and of her beautiful invitation.

"Don't go to setting up for any grand style yourself," she warned. "We're poor, and likely to stay poor, and you needn't forget it. That rich woman prob'bly invited you out of pity, and like as not to make your eyes stick out at all the grand things you'll see."

"My eyes won't stick out," said Josie, shortly.

At ten minutes after eight the night before Christmas eve, Josie was pressing the electric bell at Number fifty-eight Wilton Terrace. A



man opened the door. From his dress, Josie thought he must be a serving-man, but she thought it queer that a man should be a servant inside of a house.

The child sat gingerly down in the brightly lighted reception-room, while Mrs. Corning was being called. In a moment she made her appearance.

"This is Josie, isn't it?" she said, pleasantly. "Now come and put your things in this little closet, then William will show you the tree."

Already Josie's soul was steeped in delight at what she saw. The carpets, the vases, the beautifully carved and moulded figures on mantel and pedestal, the draperies, lamps, laces, cushions, and, over and above all else, the pictures, oh, the pictures! Of all the exquisite, lovable things in reception-room and parlor, the pictures were far and away the most attractive to her eyes.

Josie was standing by the tree, which, after the style of most Christmas trees, was stiff and



prim while unadorned; Mrs. Corning had left the parlor to find William and give him a few directions, and Josie was thinking how graceful and pretty the tree would become after being decked with the tiny bells, floss balls, pop-corn, and tinsel, all ready in boxes at hand, when, hearing a flutter close by, she turned to see a rare little figure at her side in cute bath-robe and tiny worsted slippers.

"Brother Wilfred is comin' to-morr," said the winning little witch. "Brother Wilfred and me is goin' to dance Jim Crow."

"My! aren't you a little sweet!" cried Josie, softly, and stooping to caress the little dear. "Would they let me kiss you?" she asked.

"Ev'rybuddy kisses me," said the mite. "I'm Daffy." Then she added, with cunning dignity: "My whole name is Daffy-Down-Dilly, but mamma says in the big Bible it's Marg'ret. But I'm Daffy. Wilfred says it's sweet Daffy. I like Wilfred. He's my big brother, Wilfred is."



"So Wilfred is coming to-morrow," said Josie, speaking the name softly.

"Sh! sh!" warned the baby of three years. "Mamma said we mustn't come into the parlor t'-night, any of us, 'cause we might scare Santa Claus. I jus' comed to see you. I ain't goin' to look at the Christmas tree," she added, staring at it with all her might.

Luckily the tinsel and other trimmings were in the boxes with tissue-paper over them.

"Oh, if mamma said you mustn't come down, perhaps little Daffy ought to run right back up-stairs," Josie said, longing to half-smother the little creature with kisses.

"Yes, I'm goin' right back," said wily little Daffy, "only I wanted to tell you brother Wilfred was comin'. He's in college, brother Wilfred is." Then, leaning her fluffy, golden head toward Josie, she said, with a smile that showed her little pearls of teeth:

"He knows lots, brother Wilfred does. He knows as much as a — a — great big king!



Do-do says he's got a sweetheart, but Wilfred says I'm his sweetheart. He's my brother, Wilfred is."

"And who is Do-do?" asked Josie.

"She's my sister, Do-do is, so is Gwen. Gwen thinks I'm too little. Do-do says I know too much. Wilfred doesn't think I know too much. He's comin' to-morr, Wilfred is."

But little Daffy's store of talk about her adored brother was cut short as a displeased voice began:

"O Daffy, you naughty little girl! Didn't mamma tell you not to come down again to-night? And I told Gwendolyn to watch that you didn't run away;" and there was Mrs. Corning and William back of her.

"Gwen didn't watch me, and I come to see the pretty lady," said Daffy, in an injured tone. "I won't look at the Christmas tree, but I want to stay and see the pretty lady."

"You shall see Miss Josie to-morrow night if you're a good girl and mind mamma," Mrs.



Corning said. "Now go straight to the nursery and Gwen will put you to bed."

"I want Ellen to put me to bed," cried Daffy.

"Your nurse has gone out," Mrs. Corning replied. "Gwen will see to you."

The spoiled little thing shrugged up as if about to cry. "I don't want Gwen to put me to bed; I want Ellen."

"Oh, very well," said her mother, "be a naughty child and cry, and when Wilfred comes I must tell him all about it, then I wonder what he'll say!"

"I'm a good girl," said Daffy, sweetly, "and Gwen may put me to bed. Now what will you tell Wilfred?"

"That you're his good little Daffy."

With cunning grace the child lifted her downy bath-robe, and her softly slippered feet went over the thickly carpeted stairs without a sound, her shower of golden hair fluffing about her shoulders as she hopped herself, baby-fashion, from stair to stair.



“Isn’t she a little darling!” said Josie, watching the little figure as it hopped out of sight. “I’d like to paint her.”

“Yes, she is our baby, and a spoiled baby, too, I fear,” was the reply. “Now here is William, and I think perhaps it may not take so very long to arrange the tree. I don’t want the girls to see it, as some one else is to do all the decorating, and I shall have to keep the parlor door locked all day to-morrow, or Daffy might steal in. Can I help in any way?”

“No, oh, no,” Josie replied; “only put the presents in the room, then the light ones can go on the tree, and the large ones might be put under the tree with sprays of holly around them. There is a box of holly here.”

“Yes, that would be a very good idea. Now I will bid you good night, as I am very tired. Come at about eight o’clock to-morrow night. William will lock up the parlor after you are through, and walk home with you.”



For over two hours Josie worked steadily, William assisting when necessary. At the end of that time the Christmas tree was a glittering wonder. Every few moments Josie would stand off to get the effect of what she was doing. Once William said:

“I bethink me, miss, you’re working out a picture ye’ve seen somewheres or nother, it works itself out that bewitchin’, for sure!”

The shape of the tree was faultless, not a mysterious package being allowed to “boolge,” as William expressed it, in a way to spoil a single line or curve of the tapering branches. The glittering tinsel hung in graceful loops, the strings of pop-corn always over it. The bells, caught on to narrow ribbons, hung in just the right spaces, the floss balls peeping airily here and there. The gifts were lodged on convenient boughs, while under the tree, midst holly and green twigs, were placed the larger packages. At half-past ten, Josie was on her way home.



Ah, but the beauty and the bewitchment of it all when Josie entered the parlor on Christmas eve! The young girl had never imagined the sparkle and the glamour of such a glowing scene.

There were flowers and lights and perfumes. The glint of gay, glistening silks, youthful beauty, merry chatter, and continual laughter. The warmth and gaiety, the air of wealth and ease, strange, alluring faces, and a pervading atmosphere of festivity, — all these Josie took in almost in a moment, all unaccustomed as were the entire surroundings.

And yet, had she but known it, Josie was herself quite as attractive as any object in the room.

Miss Blossom had arranged her thick, short hair before she left the store. A few locks, wayward and curly, strayed about her white forehead. Then the hair at both sides was drawn back in clumps and fastened with white satin ribbons. In one clump a white



rose, with a few green leaves about it, nestled midst the ruddy mass, like a birdling in a nest.

Her dress, pure as the snow, light and floating, was without trimming of any kind except a confining ribbon or two. Around the low neck was a lace edging, with a tiny white ribbon run through it, which was drawn snugly and tied down. Just where the lace touched her neck at the left was another white rose with its leaves, like the one in her hair. The girdle at her waist was of the same material as her dress.

During the afternoon, Madame Leroy had asked her kindly if there was any little thing in the way of trimming or of ornamentation that she would like from the store. And Josie had answered with the usual timidity when saying anything half-reluctantly:

“My elbow-sleeves are looser at the top than I like them. When I reach things from the tree, they will fall way back. I think a band of white satin ribbon put around them



just above the elbow and tied in a bow-knot would look pretty and make them feel better."

"You shall have that certainly," said Madame. "Shall the bows be made up, or will you have the ribbon just tied around."

"Oh, ma will tie them carelessly but in good shape, and that will be the prettiest way. Thank you, thank you!"

And now, in her girlish, low-necked muslin, satin ties, and two white roses, Josie was as fair a lass as one could wish to see.

On entering the room, she had been greeted by Mrs. Corning and also by Mr. Corning, with whom she went directly to the tree, under which were some carpeted library steps, which she was to mount in order to reach the gifts placed on the higher branches.

On these steps Josie sat down for a few minutes and looked shyly about. Mr. Corning, a tall, fine-looking man, wanting to put her at her ease, said, pleasantly:

"So this is our young decorator, is it?"



Josie said, "Yes, sir," then looked, with timid interest, at the breezy, showy young company before her. Two young girls, one about ten, the other fourteen, came up to her and, in a polite but somewhat distant manner, told her that they thought she had made the tree look very pretty indeed.

In some way, Josie felt at once that they did not feel she was of them, or one of their guests, and a kind of chill struck at her heart as she realized it. Yet she looked with a sweet, innocent wonder at the exquisite dresses and assured manners of the fashionable young girls, and the care-free, debonair young fellows by whom they were surrounded.

It never occurred to her to feel offended or the least resentful at the slighting manners of the young Cornings. But as she sat by herself, a little twinge of sadness creeping over her, there suddenly came a rustle and a bounce, and Daffy sprang, almost unaided, into her lap.

The child looked like a fresh and fluttering



flower, as, with her fluffy hair, her white ruffled, gauzy dress, and satin shoes, she settled herself, with a satisfied chuckle, in Josie's arms.



## CHAPTER X.

### THE CHRISTMAS TREE

JOSIE had not failed, on entering the room and looking around, to notice one tall boy in particular, who was the centre of a group of bright-faced, charming girls, and who was laughingly answering their many questions and merry speeches.

But she did not look at him long; the next moment she had turned her eyes away, for the young fellow had seen her as she seated herself under the shadow of the tree, and looked boldly and steadily at her pretty face, while still keeping up a lively chatter with the girls.

She next became interested in watching Gwen, who was talking with a modest appearing young man, perhaps a little older than



the showier young fellow, who still stared at her continually.

Gwendolyn was exceedingly pretty, and also knew it. And Josie, with her perfectly kindly little heart, knew almost immediately that Gwen was aware of her own good looks. She flitted and flirted now here, now there, chatting freely with one friend, then another, but oftenest and longest with the quiet young man, near whom it was evidently a delight to flutter.

Then Josie saw that the tall young man, not showy or breezy like the rest, was remarkably good-looking. Not with the bold, bright beauty of the young fellow who kept eying her, but with a high-bred, refined cast and air that at once caught and pleased her eye.

"I'd like to paint him," she thought. "That other boy, — I'd like to have some one else paint him, and then look at the picture, but this second gentleman, I'd like to paint him myself. He'd be a study. Such a beautiful one!"



These observations had taken but a very few moments, and Josie had got just that far when little Daffy flew up to her.

Josie's arms closed over the fairy-like child as she sprang on to her lap, and Daffy gave her a kiss that sounded all through the room.

Every one laughed, and Josie's face was red as any "Jack" rose as remarks floated about, and she felt rather than saw that nearly every one in the room was looking at her. She was too much a child herself not to have been amused at receiving such a smack as Daffy had given her.

But Daffy gave her no chance to feel much confusion, for she began with the breathless glee of a happy little bird:

"I told Wilfred you was comin', and Wilfred said, 'You don't say!'" Daffy drew down her face and opened her eyes wide as she could get them, in imitation of the way that Wilfred had opened his when she told him the news. She went on:

"I told Wilfred, 'Yes, Josie is comin' "



t'-night.' And Wilfred, he said," — open went the round eyes again, — "' Oh, my g'a-cious!'

"I told Wilfred I knew Josie was comin', and Wilfred he said: 'Oh, my stars an' stockin' strings. You must interdoose me!' An' Gwen and Do-do they squeamed and laughed."

Without waiting for the least reply, she flounced around, and, spying her beloved brother, he of the bold and buoyant air, she beckoned so rapidly with a tiny forefinger that Josie giggled in spite of herself.

Madame Leroy's sensible advice not to feel abashed, but to appear as if she was not at her first party, shot into Josie's mind and helped her as the tall, handsome youth came up at his little sister's beckoning command.

"What is it, sweet Daffy?" he asked, his bright eyes dancing, and his voice full of amusement.

"This is pretty Josie," said the mite, pointing a finger at Josie's flaming face. "I inter-



doose you!" Then back went the sunny little head, and Daffy squealed with pure delight.

"Good evening, Miss Josie," said the finished boy, not a whit taken aback by his little sister's funny introduction. "I have no doubt you have some other name besides the one this scrap of a little woman knows, but 'Josie' is as far as she has got."

"My name is Josie Bean," was the quiet, timid reply, but so charming was the young face as she spoke, and the bronze hair and eyes were so perfectly matched, the brow and neck so white, while her cheeks glowed partly with health, partly with the bashfulness of a shy young thing, that Wilfred inwardly decided that she was the most winsome creature he had ever seen.

Lovelier even than Bella Corrette, whose father was partly Spanish, and whose dark yet brilliant beauty had made her a favorite in her own special circle of acquaintance, and particularly with the young men.

"You must dance with me by and by,"



Wilfred said. "We are going to trip it a little while after the presents have been distributed, for we are not going to open our packages to-night, at least, not while we are together. You dance, don't you?"

Yes, Josie could dance. She would not have wanted this fine young man to know just where she had learned. Partly at school, where she and her young companions danced in the school-yard at recess time, singing for music as they glided not ungracefully up and down the wide, convenient enclosure. Also, whenever the hurdy-gurdies came along, seizing the first girl as a partner who chanced to appear, she would dance as naturally as a bird would fly.

Astonishing how deftly children will fall into the habit of taking steps correctly, once they have caught the trick of twirling to a dance tune.

Josie did not notice that more than one pair of bright eyes burned with uneasy, displeased glances as the bonny Wilfred lingered



at her side, not even glancing around at the group he had left.

Nor did she think it strange or out of the way when his sister Gwen came to him, and said, haughtily:

"Wilfred, we are going to have the presents given out now, and Miss Bean is to hand them down. You will find a seat over by Bella."

Wilfred stopped to whisper: "Remember, the second dance. I am already engaged for the first one," then, turning about, he added, in a louder tone:

"Come, Daffy-Down-Dilly, we must go and see the Santa Claus things come off the tree."

"I don't want to leave Josie," said the wilful mite.

"Oh, but you must," said Wilfred. "Miss Josie is going to help us get our presents now."

"Isn't she pretty?" said Daffy, never offering to stir.

The tall boy and the tall young girl broke



into a merry laugh, as, leaning forward so far that his hair almost touched Josie's cheek, Wilfred clutched up the white and gold fluff, and, despite her squirming, kicking, and laughing, bore her off to the middle of the room.

There was great merriment, much chattering, and mimic screams, as Josie, standing on the short steps, handed down the various parcels, and Mr. Corning called up the gay, young people to receive their gifts.

It was well the packets were not to be opened at once, as it would have brought about so much confusion, and taken so much time that dancing would have been out of the question.

By nine o'clock the presents had been carefully taken down while the tree was still beautiful to look upon, with its graceful loops and ribbons, its shining bells and fragrant, betinselled boughs.

The dancing was to be in a long room at the top of the house, and Josie was almost by



herself after a few moments, as she gathered up stray bits and made things tidy about the tree.

She looked around still with innocent pleasure at the carpet-like moss beneath her feet, the beautiful furniture, costly ornaments, and rich hangings, while on the walls were the valuable pictures, above all else her chief delight.

After standing a moment rapt in genuine admiration, she said, softly, thinking no one else but William was in the parlor: "I'd like to paint this room."

"Ah, would you?" said a half-surprised, but genial, voice, that made her turn hastily. But she was relieved upon looking into the fatherly face of Mr. Corning. "Would you like to paint this room?"

"Yes," and Josie dimpled as she made reply. "It is always what I think first thing when I see anything so pretty. I always wish I could paint it."



“And do you know anything at all about painting?”

“No, I can't paint because I never have tried. I can draw a little. We used to draw once a week the last year I was at school. I used to wish we could have a drawing-lesson every day. I'd love to paint. I'd love it better than anything else in the world.”

“You did excellently well with our Christmas-tree. I think it only right to praise you for having made it look so very pretty. It was quite a work of art for so young a girl. And now you like the looks of our drawing-room?”

“Oh, yes, I like it next to my papa's Dutch interior.”

Mr. Corning turned suddenly and looked in Josie's face: “A Dutch interior? What do you know of a picture of that kind, pray?”

“My father painted it; he was an artist,” Josie replied, simply. “There was cobwebby lace on a table-scarf that fell over beautifully, and a high mantel, and queer, tall chairs with



lovely carvings. I never get tired of it." She added, with girlish candor:

"If papa had lived, I'd been an artist, for he could have taught me, but there's no time now, and no one to teach me how to paint."

Mr. Corning was taking in the tall, shapely young girl as she talked. He noted the rich bloom on cheek and lip, the deep-hued, ruddy hair, and, what few men would have noticed, the pointed fingers which toyed with a neat handkerchief.

"I think I must introduce you to our young friend, Claude Ellicott," he said, pleasantly. "He is just home from Italy and Rome, also from Antwerp in Central Europe, in which places he has been painting under famous artists and learning of them. Now, he is to teach drawing and painting, and you would enjoy talking with him."

"I — I can't take lessons now," Josie stammered, feeling on the instant how useless and foolish it would be to dream of such a thing.

"Oh, well, suppose we go up and see them



dance," said Mr. Corning, lightly. "You would be very young to begin to paint now."

They mounted the broad, easy stairs, and Josie caught glimpses of beautifully furnished rooms as they went on and up over three flights, reaching at last the long room with its polished floor, where the dancing was going on.

Bella Corrette, the dark, brilliant beauty, was gliding past, with Wilfred Corning as partner, and Gwendolyn Corning was dancing with the quiet young man of the well-cut, aristocratic features.

"There," said Mr. Corning, "the young fellow that just tripped by is Claude Ellicott. Dances well, too."

Mr. Corning found Josie a seat and slipped away.

Ah, they all danced so well! Josie had seen nothing like this before. It was all like a fairy dream. Light poured down from the chandeliers, making the long apartment bright as day. In one corner was a small



grand piano, at which sat a young man playing, and by his side sat another young man with a violin. Both had been hired to play for the dancing.

The music was tripping and sweet. The fair, beautifully dressed young girls floated about as if scarcely touching the floor. The boys, bright, intelligent, and sparkling with life and gaiety, seemed simply at home in the midst of their joyous surroundings.

The pleased, innocent smile, natural to Josie's face when anything charmed her, kept the deep dimples wavering in her cheeks, and she began to long for the time to come when she, too, would dance.

Then the music ceased. The girls, flushed and panting, were led to seats along the sides of the room; the boys fanned them gallantly, or placed dainty wraps about their shoulders.

Josie had turned to look at Bella Corrette, whose lovely dress of some thin, white material over yellow silk, set off her wonderful beauty, when she heard some one say:



“Miss Josie, let me introduce Mr. Claude Ellicott; this is Miss Josie Bean, Claude. I shouldn’t wonder if you could interest her in the subject of painting,” and Mr. Corning, who had brought Claude up to introduce him, was gone.

Josie bowed, scarcely raising her eyes, as the young painter said, with boyish directness:

“I should think if you dressed that Christmas tree, you could easily learn to paint. But — will you dance?”

“Not with you this time, my dear fellow!” cried a gay voice at his other side. “This belongs to me.”

“Then the next one?” asked Claude, with a polite bow.

“Yes, I will dance with you next time,” said Josie, promptly, “then we can talk about pictures.”

“I can talk about pictures, too,” said Wilfred, as he led Josie out, and putting on an injured air as if he was not altogether appreciated.



"Yes, but can you paint?" asked Josie, dimpling.

"Must a fellow paint to make him worth talking with?"

"No, oh, no; I can love people who don't know the first thing about painting. Ma doesn't."

Josie felt an uncomfortable twinge as she spoke of her mother, but just then the violin twanged, the music began, and she flew airily and gracefully along the room with Wilfred Corning's arm half-encircling her waist.



## CHAPTER XI.

### THE DANCE

AFTER a few moments, Josie wondered why it was that neither Gwendolyn Corning nor Bella Corrette were dancing.

No, Gwen sat talking with Claude Ellicott, and Bella, she of the crimson cheeks and dark, clear skin, had swished her handsome dress close to the seat she occupied, and turned her face away from the dancers, as Josie and Wilfred swept by.

A young fellow, with a long neck and a little chicken-tuft of a mustache, a diamond stud in his shirt-bosom, and a seal ring on his finger, was hovering over the proud beauty, toying with her fan and occasionally whispering behind it.

Once, when Josie caught Miss Bella's eye,



as she flitted near her, the girl tossed her head around as if provoked that the poor child had seen her glance at her.

Yet Josie enjoyed the dance. And when it was over, and for a few minutes Wilfred sat beside her saying she was an easy dancer and a nice partner, she felt happy. Then, when Wilfred bowed himself away, up came Claude Ellicott and began talking about some pictures he had seen that afternoon at a great picture store in the upper part of the city.

All the time they were dancing, and afterward, when Claude was sitting beside her, the radiant young girl drank in every word he said with an eagerness that would have proved gratifying to almost any young man who loved his art.

Josie, for her part, noticed nothing, knew of nothing, but just what the young artist was saying. Yet dark looks were bent upon the simple-hearted child, and the older girls, in their fine dresses, with their fans, their jewels, and their hothouse flowers, were talking in



low, angry tones, were saying things that had Josie overheard, she would have rushed from the room and from the house in anger, shame, and tears.

"Why, dear me," Gwen was saying, "mamma just got her to fix up the Christmas tree, and is going to pay her for it. And then, because she thought it would please her, she asked if she would like to come and take down the presents and look on at the dancing. She never thought of such a thing as her going twirling about with our boys. She won't come here again in a hurry."

"I don't care, she's awfully pretty," put in Do-do, Gwen's young sister.

"Oh, if any one likes that flaunting style," said Bella Corrette, with a sneer. "Red hair, red eyes, red cheeks. Of course, a girl of that kind is going to push herself forward if she can. She doesn't know any better, so I wouldn't feel bad about it, Gwen."

"Ho! I think the boys are the ones to blame as to her dancing," insisted Do-do.



"They needn't have asked her; but I'm sure she danced well, and see what lovely taste she shows in her dress. So simple and becoming. She'd have been a little goose not to have danced."

"I can't help agreeing with you," laughed a stylish-looking girl, with a kind expression. "With her taste and ability, is it surprising if she would like to get up in the world, and know something of good society?"

"I prefer people who are already in it," said Bella Corrette.

But Bella was to have her foolish pride tried still farther, for there was Wilfred taking Josie out for another dance.

Just then, Mrs. Corning, who had been coaxing Daffy to let her nurse put her to bed, came into the dancing-hall, and began looking on at the merry groups. Gwendolyn, seeing her mother, went up to her.

"Mamma," she began, "did you mean for that Josie creature to dance with Wilfred and Claude Ellicott, just as if she was one of us?"



"I wouldn't speak of any young girl so contemptuously, if I were you, Gwen," her mother replied.

"Well, but did you mean for her to dance with the boys the same as we would?" persisted Gwen.

Mrs. Corning looked at the breezy child, with cheeks aglow, and rich, ruddy hair floating off from the white ribbons and nestling rose, a picture of youthful happiness and beauty.

"Say, mamma, did you?" Gwen repeated, impatiently.

"Why, n-o, I don't know as I did," her mother said, slowly, "but what harm does it do? See how she is enjoying herself. Don't be selfish, Gwen; think how you enjoy a good time. Young people are all alike."

"I don't think they are," said Gwen, "and Bella Corrette is dreadfully disgusted at her being here, just a girl asked in to decorate."

"I asked her to stay and look on at the



dance," said Mrs. Corning. A new tone crept into her voice, as she added:

"As for Bella Corrette, I have seen other young girls with whom I had quite as lief see your brother dancing as with her."

Gwen said no more. She had suspected before that, with all her wealth and beauty, Bella was no favorite with her mother, neither had she ever joined in the laughing sallies when the girls teased Wilfred about her. Gwen wondered why this was.

After Wilfred had finished his second dance with Josie, he sat beside her, until Claude Ellicott, who had watched the pair almost constantly as they circled about, sauntered up and seated himself at her other side.

"Well, did you ever see the like!" exclaimed Bella Corrette. "Really I think we little stars had better withdraw."

And, when Wilfred soon afterward hurried over and asked her to dance, she answered, coldly:

"Couldn't think of it. We are not the



fashion to-night," and she bowed with averted eyes toward Jeannette Storm and his sister Gwen.

"Oh, come, Bella," cried Wilfred, in a jolly tone, "don't be a goosey, come and dance! A fellow likes variety now and then. What wouldn't do for a regular thing comes in as a sugar-plum once in awhile. Come on."

"Couldn't think of it," coldly repeated Bella, with an independent toss of her head. "Not with me the same night."

"You come," Wilfred said, turning to Jeannette Storm, the stylish girl of kindly expression, who had said she didn't blame Josie for wanting to rise in the world if she could.

"Oh, thank you, I don't see why not," said the more sensible Jeannette, and up she got, and away they whirled, leaving Bella smiling serenely but feeling very bitter at heart.

Gwen, too, felt bitter at heart. She admired Claude Ellicott, who, instead of danc-



ing, was still talking with Josie Bean, and apparently with as much interest as if she was as well born as Gwen herself.

Gwen, moreover, felt that she had a claim on Claude Ellicott's attentions, and that he had no right to neglect her for that other and more lowly girl. For had not her father, Papa Corning, helped him in going abroad, and furnished the money that enabled him to take those valuable lessons in painting? Indeed he had! Yet, did Gwen know the whole story? If so, she seemed to forget a part of it. This must be explained.

Claude, with his real genius and the best of parentage, was alone in the world. There was neither father nor mother, brother nor sister, and Mr. Corning, who knew of the lad's talent and ambition, his strong desire to become an artist, had come forward with a generous offer of assistance.

The boy's father had left him money enough with which to finish his schooling and pay his board, but a trip abroad and art



studies under distinguished masters were not to be thought of with his slender means.

Yet the young fellow had proudly held back when Mr. Corning offered his aid, until the gentleman assured him it was not altogether a gift which he offered.

“Your father once helped me,” Mr. Corning said, “when I was thankful enough for his assistance. If now I wish to pay back the kindness to his son, with perhaps a little interest added, will you refuse to allow me to?”

So it was indeed not entirely a gift that Claude accepted from Gwen’s father, although Mr. Corning paid for the instruction that the young man received while abroad.

Now, at but twenty-one years of age, Claude was ready to give lessons in his modestly furnished studio, and was about to form classes both in drawing and painting. What wonder that, when Mr. Corning spoke of Josie’s quick eye for artistic arrangement and a nice picture, the young man should have



felt almost instant attraction for so fine a creature as he found this young Josie Bean to be?

Regardless and unconscious of Gwen's disturbed, indignant eyes, he talked on and on until he said:

"You ought to take lessons in drawing, and after a time in painting, in love as you are with everything of the kind."

Josie's eyes fell. "I can't," she said, briefly.

"I thought perhaps you might find time," Claude replied. He knew nothing about the pretty young girl, except that she had a strong artistic vein.

"I am in a milliner's store," said Josie, her innocent candor coming to her aid, "and I don't have money enough for anything of that kind, but, if ever I do have the money, I'll jump to learn drawing and painting, too." She chuckled girlishly as she added:

"I took drawing lessons the last year I was at school, and ma said that all that year every scrap of loose paper in the house was covered





“‘YOU OUGHT TO TAKE LESSONS IN DRAWING’”







with curves and lines and circles and the funniest pictures of dogs and cats and horses.

“But I don’t care,” she added, in a tone of self-comfort, “one day lately I wanted to show Miss Loomis at our store the figure that was on some fancy silk that was used for furniture, so I sketched it, and Miss Loomis said she thought it was sketched remarkably well, especially as it was done from memory.”

Then the child flushed, as she remembered she was praising herself, but she did so want this delightful young gentleman, who was ever so much older than herself, and an artist besides, to think well of her.

But Claude was silent for so long a time that Josie all at once thought perhaps he was tired of her and wanted to get away.

“Perhaps I ought to go home,” she said.

Looking around, she was surprised to find that nearly every one had slipped from the room. She looked with a scared expression at Claude Ellicott.

“Have they all gone?” she gasped.



"Only to the supper-room," he replied, carelessly. "Never mind, I want to talk a few moments more, and am glad of a chance to talk quietly.

"I was thinking," he added, speaking slowly and cautiously, as if feeling his ground, "that when I didn't feel that I could go to Europe and study as I wanted to, some one helped me, and I went. Now why shouldn't I help some one else?

"Would your mother let you come to my studio and take a lesson in drawing twice a week if I wanted to teach you? I'm just getting up classes. You would be the youngest pupil of all, but all the better for that. After learning to draw, you could take up painting; could begin, perhaps, with decorating writing-paper and envelopes for children, then some china painting might be tried, then the time would probably come when you could paint a picture. You would earn much more money from a skilfully handled brush than you ever could from trimming hats. People



should try their best to learn to do what they love to do."

Josie's eyes were bright as stars. The greatest longing of her young life came out and showed itself in her glistening eyes as the young man talked to her. Too simple-hearted for any false pride, she merely grasped the idea that this grown gentleman, this artist, who was to have classes in drawing and painting, was opening the way for her to learn to paint. What glory! She spoke as if in a dream:

"It would be splendid, splendid! And I could come to your class sometimes?"

"Yes, I should be glad to have you come twice a week with the rest of the class. No one need know that you do not pay. Ask your mother, and, if she consents, begin at once."

"I never meant to trim hats," Josie said, replying to Claude's remark of a moment before. "I like to arrange things and fix them up. It is lovely to handle pretty things, and



I just love the ribbons and laces and feathers and flowers. I love dearly to put them in designs and anything like that. But to paint! Oh, my, I should most go crazy with delight to learn to paint."

Josie suddenly clasped her hands and turned her head partly around, with a meaning gesture, as if to help out an expression of gratification. Her face was like a June morning, — bright, sparkling, sunny, so full of loveliness and light that Claude, with his artist's eye, felt a thrill of pride and pleasure that he had it in his power to call up such a glow to any young face.

"You know we must help each other in this world," he said, gently.

Josie's eyes grew dreamy. "My papa told me once, when I was a little bit of a thing," she said, "that I must help myself all I could if I wanted to get up in the world, and he said — he said —" Josie struggled with a memory that for a moment held back, then her face brightened: "Oh, yes, he said I had



the right kind of fingers to paint or to play. I remember now."

Neither Claude nor Josie saw Mr. Corning peep into the deserted room as they talked. But in the dining-room, where a wonderful table was covered with fancy dishes, ices, sherbets, cakes, and confectionery, he said to Mrs. Corning:

"Claude Ellicott and your little Miss Decorator are still in the billiard-room. Hadn't they better come down?"

"Oh, I'll see about that," Mrs. Corning replied. And feeling that perhaps it would be as well not to have Josie invited to the dining-room, seeing some of the young people felt as they did, she gave an order to one of the waiters.

That was why, as Claude and Josie sat talking, a colored waiter appeared with a tray, on which were plates that to Josie's eyes were amazingly beautiful. And in other dishes were the kind of things that the tall child had sometimes gazed at through the confectioners'



windows, wondering vaguely how they would taste. And then there were sweet delights that she never before had seen anywhere.

It did not enter her mind that it was strange she was not invited to feast with the rest. Her whole soul was steeped in satisfaction at the prospect of taking those delightful lessons, and sometime learning to paint.



## CHAPTER XII.

### FLAT STREET

WHEN the sound of returning footsteps came tripping over the stairs, Claude took up the tray, saying he would carry it to the dining-room. Then, for the first time during the evening, Josie began to feel a bit lonesome. The young girls, all older than herself by some years, except Do-do, swept past her, to be claimed at once by their partners for the next dance.

Now that her excitement began to calm, she felt tired, and she began to wonder if it was not very late.

She gave one long look around the room, and, as no one was noticing her, she slipped out and down two flights of stairs.

Then she heard the loud crying of a child,



and, as she passed one of the rooms, she saw a nurse-girl trying to quiet little Daffy, who would not lie down in her crib, but was demanding to be dressed.

All at once the mite spied Josie peeping at her through the half-closed door. Back went her head and she made a little gurgle of laughter, as she cried:

“Come in, pretty Josie, come in!”

“Shall I come in?” Josie said to the nurse.

“Oh, I’m sure, miss, I’ll be very glad if any one can make Miss Daffy be quiet,” the girl said, wearily. “She’s heard the noise in the house, and is that excited she just slept a little while, then up she waked as wild as a young hawk.”

“If Josie’ll take you, will you go right to sleep?” asked the young girl.

“I think I wouldn’t, miss,” Ellen broke in; “she’ll be afther mussing your pretty gown all up. I’d just let her scream.”

“If you put her on my lap smoothly, it will be all right,” Josie replied. “I held her once



before this evening, and it didn't do any harm. But Daffy must promise to go straight to sleep if I take her," she added, turning toward the listening child.

"I will trooly-rooly," said Daffy, stretching up her arms.

Josie smoothed her dress, and Ellen placed Daffy in her lap. The golden head nestled against Josie's neck, as, with a low croon, the young girl began rocking to and fro. She was in a high-backed rocker, which was very comfortable, especially after Ellen put a hassock under her feet.

"Wilfred said you was sweet," whispered Daffy.

"Oh, but you promised to go right to sleep," reminded Josie, who was glad the child had spoken so low.

It was quiet for a few moments, then, in another whisper:

"Gwen said he no business a-think so."

"But Daffy mustn't talk," warned Josie.



It was quiet for a longer time after that, then once more:

"Wilfred said he did thought so," sharply whispered the little voice.

"I'm afraid Josie'll have to go home, because Daffy will talk."

That quieted her at last. Josie rocked gently on. The tired maid had sunk into another chair. Daffy's little head drooped lower against Josie's neck, as she fell fast asleep. After a few moments, the room grew perfectly quiet. They were all asleep, Daffy, Ellen, and Josie Bean.

"I don't care, I think she's a perfect little beauty!"

Josie heard the words and opened her eyes. But where was she? For an instant she could not imagine. The gas had been turned up. A little child was cuddled close in her arms.

Before her stood Wilfred Corning, looking down with laughing eyes, beside him stood



his mother. Over in another chair Ellen still slept soundly. Just as her eyes opened, Josie heard a quick swishing of skirts, and she dimly saw Gwendolyn leaving the room.

"Oh, oh," softly murmured Josie, "Daffy was screaming so loud when I was going by the door to go home, I stopped a moment and she saw me. Then she called me in and promised if I'd hold her she'd go to sleep. So I took her, and then we all three dropped off." She giggled as the truth came over her. "Isn't it awfully late?" she asked.

"Yes, it is late," said Mrs. Corning, "but you were very good to help Ellen with Daffy. Now William will walk home with you."

"No, William can't," said Wilfred, "he's down to the stable helping Thomas with the horses. They've just got back from taking some of the girls home. I'll see Miss Josie home."

"No, oh, no, I'll go alone," said Josie, half-afraid at hearing Wilfred offer to go to Flat Street.



"Were you ever out alone after midnight?" asked Wilfred, with twinkling eyes.

"No, I never was," said Josie, "but I might not be afraid."

"The bugaboos would catch you, sure, and eat you up if they caught you out alone this dark night," said Wilfred, as he went for his coat and hat.

"I heard Daffy crying," Mrs. Corning said, "but was engaged just then, and, as she stopped, I supposed Ellen had quieted her. You have been very useful to-night, Josie, and I thank you, and here is something that you have earned."

She handed Josie a bill, but the girl drew back.

"Oh, no," she said, "I've had a lovely time. I don't want to be paid for it. I had all the pleasure and the nice things the waiter brought; that was enough."

"But I hired you," said Mrs. Corning, holding the bill close to Josie's hand. "You



are welcome to all the pleasure you had, but, I hired you."

Josie took the bill and said: "Thank you." Something hurt. After all, she had been hired, but, midst the pleasure and delight of it all, she had entirely forgotten that. And after all, she had not been a guest at the handsome house, at least, not a guest as the others had been. This made her think of something else, and, with her usual directness, she said:

"Perhaps I ought not to have danced."

"Oh, that was all right," said Mrs. Corning, who could not be unkind. "The young men asked you, and I know young people all like to dance."

The answer was kind, yet a chill had struck somewhere; Josie scarcely knew how or where. She had been hired! Was that the reason the older girls had let her alone, not once coming near her after their first few polite words? A sensitive child will soon understand.

Oh, dear, she wished Wilfred was not go-



ing home with her. He shouldn't. She would run away from him.

In the lower hall she caught a glimpse of the young fellow in the parlor. He was speaking to one of the servants, his coat on, his hat in his hand. Josie tugged at the heavy front door, opened it, and slipped out.

She *was* afraid. It was dark and still outside. She paused a moment as she reached the sidewalk, and in that moment the front door opened, the light streamed out, and a boyish voice called:

"Here, where are you, runaway? Couldn't you wait a second?" laughed Wilfred, as he ran lightly over the steps, and slipped his hand, friendly fashion, over Josie's elbow.

The young girl, who with all her new-found pride was very glad to have his company, said, with her natural honesty:

"I didn't think you ought to go home with me. I'd rather you wouldn't."

"Oh, come now, you don't mean that," said Wilfred, in a coaxing tone, his hand closing



more tightly over her elbow. "Wouldn't you rather have a fellow that thinks you're pretty nice go home with you than to go all alone at this time of night?"

"I was a little afraid," confessed Josie, "when I saw how dark and how still it was. I didn't care for the dark so much; it's always dark now when I go home from the store, but I didn't like to see everything gone from the streets."

"It's really Christmas Day," said Wilfred, "and has been for half an hour, for it's half-past twelve, — oh, and I wish you a 'Merry Christmas.' Now, why in the world didn't you want me to go home with you?" he asked, breezily.

"I — I live on Flat Street."

"What of that? Lots of other folks live on Flat Street, too, don't they?"

"You know I wasn't really invited to the party." A grieved strain crept into Josie's voice, although she did not mean it to.

"Suppose you wasn't?" said the jovial



Wilfred. "And yet you were. My mother asked you to come to-night; of course she did, and you helped us to enjoy the evening, making the tree look as beautifully as you did. If the older girls didn't exactly hug you up, never mind. Claude and I wanted to dance with you, and it isn't polite to refuse to dance if one knows how, unless there is some great objection to the fellow who asks you."

"Oh, isn't it?" asked Josie, feeling cheered.

"No; and, if I were you, I'd have all the fun I could get. I don't mean anything the least bit out of the way, you know, but I'd have all the fun I could. Ducklings ought to."

Josie giggled at the offhand remark.

"Only think," she said, "Mr. — Mr. Claude is going to give me lessons in drawing."

Then she wondered if Wilfred would guess she was going to have the lessons free. She rather hoped not.



"His name is Ellicott," Wilfred replied. Then he added with true gallantry: "He is lucky to get you for a pupil, and you are sure to learn very rapidly, for art and drawing are right in your line. I think Bella Corrette and my sister Gwendolyn are going to take of him, too."

"Oh, are they?"

There was either disappointment, regret, or dread in Josie's voice.

"Yes, but that makes no difference. Don't you let any of the rest of the class scare you a mite. You have the talent to do great things one of these days, and Claude sees it; so do I, so does every one you do anything for. Ah, what place is this?"

"This is Flat Street. I live down there in the house with the stone steps."

They had turned into the dark, narrow street where Josie lived. If it hadn't been for the stone steps, the poor child would have felt still more ashamed of it.

"Good night, Miss Josie, and good luck



with the lessons," Wilfred said, as he released her arm.

A light was gleaming faintly from the bedroom window as Josie rang the loudly tinkling bell, and her mother let her in.

"Goodness!" exclaimed Wilfred, under his breath, as he left Flat Street for a wider one. "I don't wonder the blooming Josie wasn't proud of her dwelling-place. She's a daisy herself, and no denying it, but I wasn't looking for exactly that kind of a tenement."

All of which would greatly have relieved Gwendolyn and Bella Corrette, even perhaps the gentle mother also, had they overheard it.

But Wilfred paced the lonely streets, surprised to find himself wishing that Josie did not live in quite so miserable a locality.

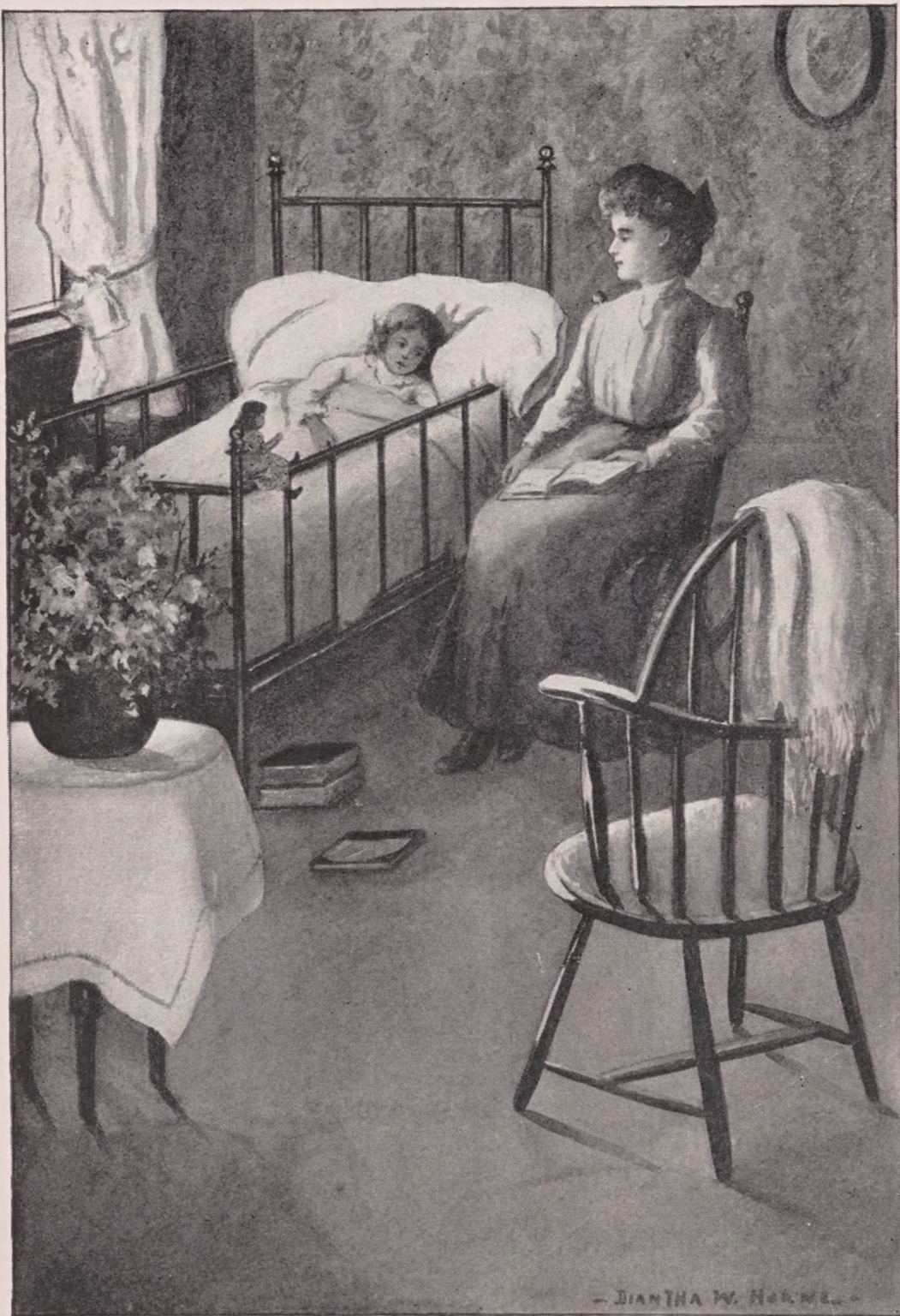
As Mrs. Bean admitted Josie, she said, crossly:

"Why didn't you stay all night and done with it? P'r'aps you didn't want to come home at all. And did you tramp through the streets alone, I should like to know?"









"JOSIE . . . SAT READING AWAY BY THE GILDED CRIB"



“O mother, don’t,” said Josie, in a tired tone. “I had a lovely time. They were kind to me, and paid me, and Mr. Wilfred, Mrs. Corning’s son, came home with me, because the coachman was too busy. Now that’s all there is to it to-night. I want to go to bed.”

“I’m sure there’s nothing to hinder your going. Here I’ve been keeping awake till all hours, waiting to let you in, and now you can’t even wait to say good night.”

“It was real good of you to watch for me, ma,” Josie replied, feeling a little consciousness of the mother-love that, under all the roughness of speech, had watched and waited for her return. “But I’m awfully tired. Tomorrow, I’ll tell you all about it, and I’m glad I’m going to be at home all day. Good night, ma.”



## CHAPTER XIII.

### A CALLER

THE next morning, Josie told her mother all about the party, of dancing a few times, and putting little Daffy to sleep, and falling asleep herself when she meant to have been at home in good season.

Poor Josie, there was no danger of her forgetting who or what she was, with her mother's sharp tongue to remind her.

"So they sent some refreshments for you and that artist fellow up to the dancing-hall, did they?"

"Yes, ma."

"Don't you know what they did that for?"

"I suppose because they wanted us to have some of the goodies. I never tasted such elegant things before."



“Yes, but what’s more, they didn’t think you was nice enough to go with the rest of them to the fine dining-room. If I couldn’t be treated like the other folks I trained with, I wouldn’t train with them at all. But that’s probably the last you’ll ever see of them.”

Josie had not thought of that before. She had felt pleased when the waiter brought the loaded tempting tray and greatly had she enjoyed the new dainties on it. Now, that, too, was dashed.

She looked at her mother with a curious gaze. A moment before she had been casting about in her mind, asking the question how best to tell about the drawing-lessons. Now she did not care how she told. If all the sweetness had got to be taken out of everything, she was just going to go ahead and take all the comfort she could, no matter if her mother did scold and see the worst side of things.

For a moment she felt tempted not to say anything about the lessons. But Josie was



too good a girl to do things slyly, so she said, with just a touch of independence:

“Ma, I’m going to take lessons in drawing.”

“Who of?”

“A young gentleman that Mr. Wilfred’s father introduced to me. An artist that Mr. Corning thinks a good deal of.”

“What, this Wilfred?”

“No, ma; the artist is a friend of Mr. Wilfred Corning’s, too, but it was his father that introduced me.”

“And what will there be to pay for these fancy-fine lessons, and how will you manage about the milliner’s?”

Josie explained that she thought Madame Leroy would let her off an hour on Monday and Thursday mornings. She told also of Mr. Claude Ellicott’s kindly offer to give her lessons free of charge, and the perfect delight it was going to be to have instruction in her favorite and beloved art.

“For he says,” the girl went on, “that at



the end of a year I can begin to paint a little, and he asked first thing if my mother would be willing to let me take the lessons."

Mrs. Bean faced squarely about so as to look directly in Josie's face. "See here, Josephine," she began, "your father used to spend his time daubing on canvas, and how much was it ever worth to him?"

"I think papa painted beautifully," Josie cried, indignantly, "and I'm sure you sold his pictures without any trouble."

"Yes, but how much did they bring? It's all very well to tell about being an artist, but I don't mean you shall take up any such thing. Stick to your hats and flowers, and ribbons and feathers, and you may do well enough. You found that for yourself, and I'll confess a good thing it's been for you. But I don't want to hear another word about any lessons from some stuck-up artist, and you a young girl not quite thirteen."

Any reply Josie might have made was cut short by a jingling of the rattly bell. The



girl went to the door, and there stood Claude Ellicott. He lifted his hat with the same grace as if it had been Gwendolyn Corning before him, as he said:

“Good morning, Miss Josie. I thought perhaps you would be kind enough to let me see that Dutch interior. I would like to get an idea of your father’s method in painting.”

Josie showed him into the room which was sitting-room, workroom, and bedroom all in one, and was very glad that her mother, busy and carelessly dressed, had slipped into the kitchen at the prospect of their having a caller.

Mr. Ellicott did not appear to notice anything except the picture he had come to see. He stood so long before it that Josie had begun to tire of waiting, feeling nervous and impatient to know his opinion of it. At length he spoke, but more to himself it seemed than to any one else.

“The coloring is beautiful, exquisite! The



execution is fine also. The work would be perfect only — ”

He stopped, went nearer, and gazed again.

“ Was your father a sick man, sick a long time? ” he asked.

“ Yes, ” Josie replied. “ I heard ma say once that he never was strong, and I never can remember his being well. ”

“ That accounts for it, ” Claude went on. “ The picture is beautifully painted, yet there are signs of there having been a nervous or uncertain touch in some parts. There is no doubt that your father was a true artist, and only a person with a trained eye would see the slight imperfections which might possibly prevent even as fine a picture as this one from selling very quickly. ”

“ Ma said papa's pictures never sold for enough money, ” said Josie, simply, “ but I love this one; I always loved it. ”

Claude Ellicott looked around quickly. “ And well you may love it, ” he said, heartily. “ It is a fine, lovely work of art. What I



said must not alter your feeling in the least. I was only looking at it as an artist would. Don't suppose I do not think it fine. I do, very fine!"

He spoke so earnestly that Josie, who a moment before had quailed at hearing a word against the painting she loved, felt reassured, and also felt all her old admiration for it.

"Yes, it is a study, that little painting," Claude went on, "but, by practice and close attention, you can learn to do still better," and he smiled encouragingly. "It takes a long time, but everything nearly comes slowly that is of great worth. But I called also to see if you could take your first lesson next Monday morning at ten o'clock?"

"Yes, I can," and Josie spoke with determination, knowing that her mother would overhear her, and hoping she would think it best to give her consent.

The young artist did not stay long, but in some way he managed to make Josie feel comfortable and quite free from confusion.



“Everything will be provided at the studio in the way of material,” he said. “I should scarcely know how to tell any one what to bring.” Then he was gone.

Mrs. Bean had indeed overheard every word, just as Josie had hoped. When she came back to the sitting-room, vest in hand, — for she had said there were no holidays for her except Sundays, — Josie had produced a package from some mysterious corner.

“Ma,” she said, smiling beautifully, “I wish you a ‘Merry Christmas,’ and here is a little present I bought for you.”

“La,” said Mrs. Bean, looking flustered at the unexpected turn of affairs, “you needn’t gone buying a present for me.”

“But I wanted to. It made me awfully happy,” said the dear child.

And there was a pair of fine steel shears, and also a pair of shining buttonhole scissors.

Josie had heard her mother say her old buttonhole scissors were almost past sharpen-



ing. A good pair of shears, such as she often needed for paring off seams and cutting edges, she had never possessed.

Her mother's face fairly flushed. "Well, I must say," she began, "you've cert'nly shown sights of common sense in what you've chose, if you was bent on making some presents! When you said you'd got a present for me, I felt like scolding you for wasting your money on some foolish knickknack I wouldn't give a copper groat for. But a good sharp pair of shears, and a nice new pair of buttonholers—well, child alive, I'm much obliged!"

Josie was so pleased she flew at her mother and kissed her.

"I cheated you, ma, just for a little while," she said, gleefully. "I handed you eight dollars to be put away, that they gave me at the store after I decorated the window, but they gave me ten. I wanted to get you the Christmas present. Madame said perhaps I'd like to, so I kept back the two dollars.



They're the best. I got them at that great cutlery store up-town."

"Oh, yes, they show they're the best," said her mother.

There was silence a moment, then Josie asked, timidly:

"You're willing I should take the lessons, ain't you, ma?"

For a moment her mother did not reply. When she did, Josie noticed that her voice was neither harsh nor loud:

"I don't see that I can help myself, seeing you've gone and given your word you would take them whether or no. But, Josie, you're nothing but a child, and don't know scarcely the first thing about the world yet. I'm your mother, and want you to do well and all that. I only hope I can trust you to behave yourself and not go fooling or joking in a free, bold way with any young man you take lessons of, or any other young fellow you may see at a studio.

"I peeked through the crack of the door



when that young painter was here, and I'm free to say he had a good face and appeared like one of the decent sort. I don't know all I might about some things, and I never had time to go finicking about fancy-fine manners, but I can tell you one thing, a girl can make young fellows treat her with a good deal of respect if she has a mind to, or she can act loose and careless, and first thing you know they get an idea that they can act pretty much as they take a notion."

"Mr. Claude Ellicott wouldn't," exclaimed Josie, her goldy-brown eyes stretched wide at such a thought, "nor I don't believe Mr. Wilfred Corning would, either."

"Oh, I don't know," her mother replied. "Young fellows are pretty much all alike; not but what I thought that artist looked like one of the right kind. Still, it isn't easy to tell. Thing for you to do is, never forget your own manners, and be careful, be very careful. You see, I haven't forgotten about that young scamp that invited you to the theatre. You



acted right in telling me about it afterward, and I needn't 'a' scolded as I did p'r'aps. But you remember he made you think it would be all right to go without telling any one. Maybe you wasn't so dreadf'ly to blame, still, it ought to be a lesson."

"'Twas," said Josie, "but honestly, ma, I'd almost forgotten it."

Her mother was silent again for a moment or two, and looked half-puzzled as if wanting to say something, yet scarcely knowing how to say it. Then she began, slowly:

"The truth is, some folks, partic'larly young fellows, might think you was tol'rably good-looking. Your skin is pretty good, and your teeth have come in even, and so it comes easy to pay silly compliments. But don't ever mind them. Remember, 'handsome is that handsome does;' don't go thinking of anything else. Behave like a sensible girl, and I sha'n't be afraid to trust you. That's the whole thing in a nutshell."

"I don't care anything about my skin or



my teeth," said Josie, giggling healthfully, and feeling only tremendously relieved that her mother's lecture was so kindly a one. It really was excellent advice her mother had given, but Josie was so innocent of her own charms as hardly to understand why her mother need have spoken of her looks at all.

It was a very quiet but also a very pleasant Christmas Day that Josie passed at home. As she helped get the dinner, which was better than usual, she whispered to herself:

"How good ma has been! Now, if I keep patient and do the very best I can, she may grow real gentle, and perhaps come to love me better."

The poor child! She had felt that her mother did not love her very much. The loud voice and harsh words had brought about that impression. But Josie was mistaken. Yet she wisely resolved to take the good advice and try to be very prudent.

About one thing she was silent. That was



the manner and treatment of the girls she felt to be far above her. She felt sure in her inmost soul that to tell that would bring about a storm of displeasure, and make her mother's voice grow harsh again.

So, after dinner, when she was pulling out bastings to help a little, and inwardly rejoicing that she no longer had to do it all the time, she told about cunning little Daffy, kind Mrs. Corning, and the money that had been paid her.

"How about the other girls?" asked her mother, sharply.

"Oh, they came up and spoke pleasantly," Josie replied, carelessly, "but they were all taken up with their dancing and with each other. I was a stranger, you know."

"Yes, I'll warrant you was!" said her mother, the old bitterness in her tone. Then she added, more mildly:

"P'r'aps, after all, they treated you well as I could expect. It was very good of the young



man of the house to come home with you, and that artist man cert'nly spoke to you like a gentleman."

"That's all true, ma," Josie said, blithely.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### AT THE STUDIO

CHRISTMAS had fallen on Thursday, and the next morning at the store Josie told Madame Leroy of the chance she had to take drawing lessons.

Madame pondered. "I will have to speak to Mr. Rockson about it," she said. "It seems a good opportunity to take lessons, but two hours means just so much taken out of your time at the store each week."

Josie looked sober, yet she did not mean to give up those lessons. She would sooner go back to picking out bastings if it came to that.

But, after she had been busy in the work-room sometime, Madame came to her and said that, if on Mondays and Thursdays she would bring her lunch to the store, so giving



nearly an hour extra there on those days, she could take the hour and a little more that it would take to go to and from the studio, and have an hour for the lesson.

To this Josie gladly agreed. It would prevent her helping her mother at noon, as she usually did, but that, she felt, her mother would not greatly mind, especially as she paid regularly now for her plain food, and often at noon her mother would bid her, in an off-hand way, either to take a walk or to rest herself.

Now, however, Josie would want her evenings for drawing, as they would be her only time for practice. But, as that was to require more eyesight than strength, she felt sure of being able to make headway.

And Madame Leroy was kind enough to say that on very stormy days there might be time for her to catch up the pencil for a little while at the store, if on very forbidding mornings she chose to bring paper and pencil with her.



“Of course duties must not be neglected,” Madame said, “but I have never found you backward in attending to duties yet.”

That was kind, and Josie’s young heart warmed afresh toward the good woman who had already done so much to help her.

On the way home, after his call at Flat Street, Claude Ellicott was busy with his thoughts. For the first time he was asking himself how the lofty Miss Corrette and proud Gwendolyn Corning would be likely to meet Josie in the class on Monday morning.

Flat Street had been something of a shock to him, as it had also been to Wilfred Corning. But to his artist’s eye, keen, correct, and beauty-fond, Josie had been quite as attractive in her dress of navy-blue with its crimson silk designs, and in broad daylight, as she had been in her pretty dress of white muslin, and under the gas-jets.

“I’ve no right to force those girls of wealthy parents to meet any one they do not



want to," he murmured, his brow contracting; "neither will I deprive that pretty creature of the great pleasure it is plain to see she will derive from the lessons.

"Neither Miss Bella nor Miss Gwen begin to sport the beauty of this young Josie, to my way of thinking, nor do I expect to find anything like the same degree of talent with these more favored lassies that I look for with the little beauty of the bronze eyes."

His brow cleared as he added:

"I can do but one thing: let them come together as a class on Monday, and, if there is any revolt, I will keep dignified, but show a little strength of will. I will not send away my fairest and most promising pupil! They will come for the fun of the thing, those richer girls; she, little Miss Josie Bean, will come with a purpose, with the purpose of becoming an artist. She will become an artist, too!"

Monday morning: and at a long table in the studio of Claude Ellicott sat six young





“ “WAS EVER THERE SUCH AN IMPERTINENCE KNOWN  
BEFORE ! ” ”







girls, all ready to begin a lesson in drawing. Then the electric bell of the studio sent forth its decisive br-r-r, and Josie Bean was admitted.

At sight of her, Bella Corrette, beautifully gowned in an expensive walking suit, shot an indignant look at Gwendolyn Corning, and another in the direction of Jeannette Storm, as who would say:

“Was ever there such an impertinence known before!”

Gwendolyn looked disturbed and provoked, Jeannette looked amused. The other three pupils, not knowing Josie at all, looked simply interested and curious.

Mr. Ellicott seated Josie at an end of the table. It was a conspicuous seat, and the girl blushed painfully as she took it, but it was not beside any one else, and that was why she was placed there.

It seemed for a few moments as if a resistive spirit was going to manifest itself, making things unpleasant generally, but, being



ready to proceed, Mr. Ellicott spoke in a pleasant yet masterful tone, which demanded attention. Beautifully sharpened drawing pencils and copy-books were before each pupil, and they were requested to draw lines and marks as much like those before them on the first page as possible.

"You do not hold your pencil right, Miss Corrette," Claude said, wanting to fix the proud beauty's attention strictly on her work. "And may I request," he added, "that there be no talking while the lessons are in progress."

Beside each pupil the young master stopped and gave directions. When he came to Josie, he had only words of encouragement and praise.

"That is good, very good," he said, examining the page carefully. "Let me see how near you can come to producing the perfect circle, said to be the artist's sternest test."

As if by magic, he swung the pencil around, leaving on the paper so accurate a circle that



Josie felt an instant ambition to do the same thing. Round went her pencil, but alas! the first attempt showed more an oval than a circle in shape. A second attempt left more a kind of gibbous effect than anything else, and Josie, laughing and flushing, gave it up.

The lesson was a new delight to her. When it was over, she looked repeatedly at Gwendolyn Corning, thinking it would be more polite to bow to her. But, no, she was not permitted to; Gwen kept her head so stiffly turned the other way that Josie, feeling in haste to return to the store, gathered up her precious copy-book and pencils, and nodded "good morning" to Mr. Ellicott, but he started forward and, opening the door for her, said, with a nod and a smile: "Remember, Thursday morning."

"Is she coming all the time?" asked Bella Corrette, as Claude turned back.

"Yes," he said, "I hope so, for she bids fair to make her mark one of these days. Her father was an artist of decided talent, and



Miss Josie has the touch, the finger-tips, and the hungry desire, all the three that help toward making the painter."

"Have you any other days except Mondays and Thursdays for teaching?" asked Gwendolyn Corning.

"No, not for beginners," said Claude, with decision. "I am still a student myself in a way," he went on, "as I am drawing from models in another studio, and shall have no time for forming other elementary classes."

"We were thinking whether or not we cared to keep on," said Bella, imperiously. She was drawing on a pair of kid gloves, and the diamonds on her hands sent back flashes of rainbow tints as she jerked the gloves over them.

"There are to be other pupils on Thursday," said Claude, speaking with gentle dignity, "and, if you do not wish to keep on, you and Miss Gwendolyn, it would be better to decide at once, as I am to have a limited number in this class, and shall not want to



take any more beginners after Thursday. Tuesdays and Fridays I have more advanced pupils."

He smiled, the rare smile that lit up his fine face, and looked at the two girls inquiringly.

"I shall keep on now I've begun," said Gwen, smiling back at him, "and I want to make progress, too."

"Well, come on," said Bella. "I suppose I shall keep on if you do."

"Wait a moment," said Claude, and to Gwen's great satisfaction he went out with them. At the end of three long blocks, Claude left the girls and went in another direction, but it had pleased Gwen to have his welcome company even for that distance.

"Well!" broke out Bella, as Claude strode away, "he was up and down enough about his old lessons, wasn't he? Didn't seem to care a straw whether we kept on or not. Do you suppose he knew we didn't care for the company of that Miss Decorator?"



“ Oh, I don’t know,” Gwen answered, carelessly. Then she added more vigorously, her color rising a little, “ Yes, I do think he knew just how we felt. But do you know, Bella, I just like a man that’s bound to go ahead and have his own way about his own affairs. That’s his drawing class, and I believe he had made up his mind to give that Josie lessons, and would sooner have seen us all leave, every blessed mother’s child of us, than have had her leave, and, mad as I was, I liked him for it! ”

“ I don’t believe Wilfred would have thrust her on to us that way,” said Bella.

“ Oh, don’t you be too sure,” laughed Gwen. “ Wilfred’s got an awful will of his own. I’ve heard mamma say more than once that she only hoped he would never get his head set on any course that would worry her, for he would hold on like grim fate. He managed to go home with that Josie girl on Christmas eve, or rather on Christmas morning, as it was.”



Bella stopped short and stamped her foot.

"You don't mean it!" she exclaimed.

Gwen laughed outright.

"It all seemed to come about naturally enough," she went on. "Daffy was screaming with all her might as the Josie was on her way down-stairs to go home much earlier, but Daffy saw her, and nothing would do but she must go in and hold her. Daffy's taken an immense fancy to her. So the girl took Daffy in her lap, and both fell fast asleep. When mamma woke her up, after you'd all gone home, William and Thomas were busy at the stable, so nothing would do but Wilfred must see the Josie home."

"Oh, she wanted him fast enough," sneered Bella.

"Well, he was admiring her looks when the girl woke up, but she seemed to think he was speaking of Daffy instead of her."

"I wouldn't have suspected that Wilfred had low tastes," said Bella, angrily.

"My brother hasn't low tastes," Gwen an-



swered, with spirit, "nor he wouldn't feel flattered to hear that any one said he had —"

"Dear me," quickly interrupted Bella, "I didn't say he really had them. I said I shouldn't suspect that he had."

"What are you two arguing about?" asked a girlish voice just back of them, and they turned to see Jeannette Storm, who joined them as she added: "You were so busy with your talk that when I called your names twice, right behind you, neither one nor the other had any ears to hear."

"We were speaking about Claude Elliott's queer freak in taking that Josie Bean into the art class," explained Bella.

"I thought he made it pretty plain that the rest of us might go or stay, as best pleased our own sweet selves," said Jeannette, good-naturedly as ever.

"I supposed the class was to be select," added Bella.

"So it is," cried Jeannette; "I'm there!"



Bless your high nobleness, what more could you ask? ”

“ What do you think of Miss Bean of Flat Street? Is she exactly to your mind? ”

“ Doesn’t trouble me a bit,” said the serene Jeannette. “ I only know one thing. I envy her her dear little hands. She used her pencil, too, as if she was used to it. I predict she’ll make some good pictures one of these days. Day-day, I’ve got to cross here.”

As Jeannette left them, Gwen said, after a moment of quiet, and speaking in a low, thoughtful voice:

“ I think Claude has a very sweet spirit, even if he is bound to be a little independent. I believe he came out with us girls just to let us see he liked us all right, no matter if he wasn’t going to urge us to stay in the class.”

“ I reckon he likes you all right,” said Bella.

“ Oh, I don’t know about that,” Gwen replied, but there was a pleased light in her eyes.



"Here comes Wilfred," exclaimed Bella.

And, crossing the street, the handsome boy bore down on the girls, who received him with gay nods, smiles, and merry words of welcome.

As for Josie, she returned to the store with mixed feelings of joy and hurt, sensitive pride. She had understood the cold, displeased air of both Bella Corrette and Gwendolyn Corning.

"But I don't care," she said to herself, "I needn't mind those proud girls one bit, for Mr. Ellicott was just splendid, splendid!"



## CHAPTER XV.

### GETTING ON

TWO years slipped away. Josie was fourteen, taller than at twelve and fairer. She had learned many things in the two years that passed so swiftly.

Little by little she had come to realize that any real progress she made in life must be made in the face of difficulties. She was an ambitious girl. She discovered for herself that fine taste in one direction was likely to reach to her whole nature, and make her desire the best she could get in all directions. She tried to speak correctly, and soon made but few mistakes in expressing herself.

And against her will, but in the natural course of events, she had learned to trim hats, for she was still at the milliner's. From do-



ing the simplest things, such as learning to do "slight stitch" in making folds, tacking in a lining, mixing sprays of flowers, and deftly twisting up a bow, she had learned considerable of the milliner's art.

And so useful she had made herself, and so faithful she was withal, that neither Mr. Rockson nor Madame Leroy would have parted with her except with the most extreme unwillingness.

She was getting eight dollars a week now, very good pay for so young a girl, but she earned it. Her quick eye and deft fingers did much for show-case, table, and form. Cheerful, fond of fun, and also willing, Josie would have been a valuable assistant in any store where she felt happy and at home. And at present she was quite content at the great millinery house.

The two years had not been without little happenings of importance to attractive Josie.

On one thing she had insisted. When her pay had been last raised, six months before,



she had gone quietly about looking up rooms in a different place from Flat Street. And she persevered, until one day she heard of a woman living in a perfectly respectable part of the city who owned her house, and, being alone, wanted to rent three good rooms to one or two desirable persons.

Josie had heard the price she had set, which was too high for her, but she went to the house, and in a businesslike way made an offer for the rooms.

The woman higgled and haggled, but, liking Josie's looks and manners, and finding that not another penny would she pay than the price she said she could comfortably afford, she consented to let the rooms, for which she was really to receive a fair price.

Then came the battle with her mother. But Josie was to pay the amount over and above what her mother was already paying for rent, besides paying a small board; they could have a neat little sitting-room, which Josie had saved the money to furnish plainly.



Then again, it would be considerably nearer to the tailor for whom her mother still worked.

And Josie carried the day. At first there was something of a struggle, for her mother had not yet learned to speak softly, and she had to say in ungracious terms that what had been good enough for her for years ought to be good enough still, and for Josie also. But she was growing proud of her smart and pretty daughter, and did not choose to carry things with too high a hand. Josie would not scold back, but she might quietly go her own way, and that would never, never do.

Once settled in the new quarters, Josie declared she felt like another girl, living in a new neighborhood, and having a really nice little home.

And the drawing lessons? Oh, she had come on famously. Near the end of a year, so great had become her desire to paint even ever so little that she secretly bought a few brushes and paints — expensive things those



— and began “doing” some of her drawings in colors.

Surely Nature taught her. Once, on a holiday, she went to a little park, taking luncheon and drawing materials and remaining nearly all day. There she sketched a robin of the oriole type that came and eyed her, and then hovered near, condescending at intervals to gobble the crumbs she kept throwing down.

On different parts of the accurate sketch she wrote the tints to be worked in. On the topknot was faintly traced, “gold, blue, and green;” at the breast “scarlet;” the back, “black and gold,” and so on.

At odd times for several days she worked at her robin. When it was done she showed it to Mr. Ellicott. He opened wide his astonished eyes.

“Did you do that?” he asked.

“Yes, from life.”

“You can take up painting at once,” was the significant reply.



Of course Josie worked hard. Yet such was her perfect joy and satisfaction in sketching and painting that it never occurred to her that she was working, when in the studio or at home she had pencil or brush in hand.

In a corner of her bureau drawer, under the paper that served as a lining, was something that not for the world would the sensitive girl have had any one see but herself.

On one occasion Mr. Ellicott had had some photographs taken, which were so excellent and true to life that Josie, with a touch of the old timidity, asked if she might take one home to show her mother.

Mr. Ellicott laughingly consented, and Josie did show it to her mother, but, sitting until very late that night by herself, she copied as nearly as she could every detail of the picture. Then she hid the copy away. When, after several sly seasons at work, she had colored it, many an aspiring young artist might have envied her the work of her skilful hands. But no money would have bought it!



For Claude Ellicott, artist and gentleman, was to Josie at once the kindest, most generous, most perfect-mannered young man she had ever seen or ever expected to see.

The girl had gone from the Monday and Thursday class to that of Tuesdays and Fridays, for more advanced pupils. And, unexpectedly, to Claude's surprise, Miss Gwendolyn Corning had developed quite an artist's vein. Not the ability that Josie possessed, yet Gwendolyn, dressy, chatty, and strangely ambitious where the lessons in art were concerned, bent to the work with an ardor that brought a good degree of success.

Down deep in her heart she admired Claude Ellicott every whit as sincerely as did poor Josie. His every word of praise was music to her ears. And Gwen was able to offer perfectly proper returns to the young artist besides paying well for her lessons, — returns such as Josie could not dream of offering.

There were occasional receptions at the



fine house on Wilton Terrace and there were art-galleries and picture stores to be visited, Wilfred Corning and Bella Corrette generally going too, for Bella still took lessons at the studio in a straggling sort of way.

Josie knew it all. Gwendolyn never more than bowed distantly to the young "milliner girl," as she regarded her, but she prated distinctly enough of the different occasions when, in company with Claude, she went here and there, or perhaps met him at receptions and entertainments, for the popular young artist it would seem was wanted almost everywhere.

From Gwendolyn's talk alone, Josie gathered and held the belief that Claude was very fond of the rich and pretty girl. And in her girlish heart it became unconsciously a dream that lingered and lingered, of how great and beautiful a thing it must be to have so fine and good and gifted a young man for a constant and loving friend. Surely Gwen must be very, very happy!

Yet — there were times when Josie won-



dered if Gwen would quite like it if she knew how kind Claude was to her, — to her, Josie Bean of Flat Street. He was always so kind! Josie had offered to pay something for her lessons, as her pay was increased at the store. No, he would not take a penny. Then she said, shyly, that she must at least pay for some of the material used.

“No, you are my only ‘foster pupil,’” he replied, looking into her bronze eyes and smiling genially. “Don’t spoil the pleasure I take in teaching you. It won’t be so very long that I can teach you much more, I fear.”

A few times he had asked Josie if she could be spared from the store to attend exhibitions of paintings by celebrated artists. And Madame Leroy always said, “Yes,” for she knew of Claude Ellicott, and was not afraid to grant the delightful favor.

Things also had happened during the two years just sped that showed the fine little character Josie possessed.

On several Saturday nights, when the store



was open until nine o'clock, Wilfred Corning had dropped in, making some slight purchase. Once it was "lute string" with which to tie up papers.

"You know," he said, laughingly, "lawyers generally carry green baize bags, and in them are important 'legal papers,' so called. We tie the papers or documents with red tape, or red lute string; it's the fashion. I'm bound to look as professional as the older law boys, — hence, have you red lute string?"

Another time he wanted to surprise Daffy with a new ribbon to put around the neck of "Fuzz," her Angora kitten.

Still again, he wanted a tiny feather and a rose to twine about a funny valentine.

But, after these and other purchases, on starting for home, Josie would be surprised at finding her elbow had slipped into the hollow of a strong young hand. And there, laughing and chatting with an air of good comradeship it was hard to resist, would be Wilfred Corning, pacing along as if it was only the most



natural thing in the world that he should be trudging by Josie's side, and seeing that she reached Flat Street in safety.

Josie, in a matter-of-fact way, told her mother of the purchases, and also of the walk home afterward. At last her mother one night asked, sharply:

"What's that smart young man dropping into the store for so often on Saturday nights, then coming along home with you? Comes in the dark, you see. And what about that peacock of a girl that dwaddles over art lessons for the sake of keeping in with his sister?"

Mrs. Bean never "dwaddled" over things she had to say. And scraps that Josie had told from time to time, perhaps in laughing mood, she had pieced together in her mind and formed her own conclusions. Yet Josie wondered now how her mother knew so much.

But to her first question, Josie replied:

"Why, he comes into the store for little



things he wants, then walks home with me just for fun, I suppose."

"I'll come for you next Saturday night," her mother said.

And go for her she did. As Wilfred made his usual trifling purchase, an ordinary looking woman came up to Josie, and said, in rather loud tones:

"Come, daughter, most time for you to be going. I stopped in for you on the way down."

Josie blushed furiously, but said, stoutly:

"Yes, ma, I'll be ready in a minute."

Wilfred took the hint. He did not appear on Saturday nights after that. Better so, although Josie felt uncomfortable over the affair.

Yet Wilfred was not quite driven away. It did not escape Madame Leroy's keen eyes that the handsome son of Mrs. Jasper Corning found it convenient to drop into the store every few days on a real or pretended errand. And it was noticeable that it must always be



the tall young girl with a wealth of bronze hair, and with eyes to match, that must wait upon him.

Sometimes Josie would really forget to mention the call to her mother, then again she would speak of it. But, whenever she did, there was so much grumbling and so many disagreeable things said, that the girl began wondering after awhile if it was best to speak of so trifling an affair when it caused so much disturbance.

But she was too outspoken to like concealment, and would doubtless have gone on telling of Wilfred's calls had it not been that her mother broke into such violent speech one night when she spoke of his having come into the store that she said:

"I promised, ma, to tell you whenever a young fellow talked with me in the store or walked home with me, but it makes so much trouble that I won't promise it any longer. You hinted, too, that I asked Mr. Wilfred Corning to come. I never did in my life!



What's more, I wouldn't care if I never saw him again. I'm tired all out with the talk that's made every time I mention his name!"

Mrs. Bean saw her mistake, but would not own it; instead, she said, angrily:

"I'll tell that Madame to drive him away next time he comes."

Josie made no reply. She knew very well her mother would do nothing of the kind. Scold as she might at home, she stood in awe of people who were above her. She would have been afraid to address either Mr. Rockson or Madame Leroy. But, seeing the anxious look on her mother's face, Josie said, after a few moments:

"I sha'n't do anything either rude or wrong, ma, so you needn't be afraid, but I mean it when I say I don't want any more trouble. I come home tired and want things pleasant. If Mr. Corning comes to the store too often, you'd better believe Madame Leroy will drive him away. She sees all that is going on. So rest easy."



Several times after that, it happened that Wilfred, on Tuesdays and Fridays, turned into a certain street not far from the studio just as Josie reached it also. The walk from the corner to the milliner's was not far. But it seemed as though the young lawyer could not let more than a very few days go by without seeing the morning-like face of Claude Ellicott's "foster pupil."

"That isn't 'coming in the dark,'" chuckled Josie.



## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE GREAT FAIR

STILL another year slipped away. Young as she was, Josie began to think how the time flew by. Fifteen and not far from sixteen. "I am actually getting to be a young lady," she said.

So busy still were the hours of each bright day that life was full of activity and charm.

"Painting, oh, painting!" Josie made the exclamation with a voice full of fervor and gladness. "I would rather be a painter," she added, "than anything else in the world."

She had copied the "Dutch interior," and, although under Mr. Ellicott's instruction she had corrected some of her father's touches, she yet could see plainly that she had not attained to her father's skill in other directions.



"But I will some day," she told herself confidently.

One morning, as she was busily engaged grouping some artificial flowers for the window, a large, handsomely dressed woman came into the store, and, after looking around hurried in a businesslike way over to where Josie was standing.

"Ah, good morning," she said, briskly, "is this the young lady who has shown considerable taste in decorating in times past? Miss Bean, did Mr. Ellicott call you?"

Josie's heart gave a quick throb at hearing the magic name, and she blushed becomingly.

"I am Miss Bean," she said, modestly.

"Well, now, my dear, I must talk fast, for time is precious, precious to you" — the lady bowed toward Josie with a quick smile — "as well as to me. But I've come to see if I could engage you for something very nice, and you won't refuse me, will you?"

"I hope not," Josie said, smiling as she



spoke. She liked the friendly air and coaxing voice of the bustling lady.

"The fact is, there is to be a great fair in about three weeks at the Academy."

She meant the local Academy of Music, and Josie understood. She went on:

"The veterans of the G. A. R. — Grand Army of the Republic, my dear — have sent word to the churches and to many of our public organizations that, if all will kindly aid them in getting up a successful fair, enabling them with the proceeds to furnish their new hall, they will promise that it shall be the last time they will ask assistance of the public. So do it we will. Thinning off fast, my dear, the veterans; most of them old enough to be your grandfather.

"Well, now, Miss Bean, we want of course to make this a success, a grand success! So we are striving to get the best talent in every way. And our young people are taking hold beautifully, beautifully! Claude Ellicott is going to give two oil-paintings that ought to



sell for enough to furnish one corner of the room, and a good big corner, too. Mr. Corrette, one of our wealthiest citizens, gives fifty boxes of Havana cigars. Spanish, you see, and being a tobacconist knows the best brands, you can depend.

“Mr. Corning, another wealthy citizen, gives china ware of exquisite quality; deals in it, and knows how to select the most catchy, salable pieces for such an affair.

“Mr. Twitchell gives an elegant baby carriage and three lovely wicker chairs. Sure to sell, all of them!

“Kemp & Seaman give a kitchen range and three fire-screens, valuable, really valuable, and so on.

“Now,” smiling blandly, “you’re a little patriot, I suppose?”

“Oh, yes,” said Josie, “I think I am.”

“All good girls and boys are patriots, or at least should be, and so of course want to help all they can when such a cause is presented. And it is always expected that at a



fair of this kind some entertainment will be furnished, and there seems to be nothing else that quite so completely takes the public eye and fancy as tableaux. Good tableaux, my dear, are always a great attraction.

“And what does my husband do but goes and offers my services in arranging for the tableaux! The fair is to last four evenings, and these living pictures are to be presented on the first two. My daughter, as it happens, has been a pupil of Mr. Claude Ellicott, and I thought to myself, ‘Now that artist is just the person to tell who can assist me in getting up the tableaux.’

“What I want is some one with an artistic eye who will assist in dressing the young girls who pose in the pictures, and will give directions as to posing. So I said to Mr. Storm, — by the way, I am Mrs. Storm, — so I said to my husband, I was going straight to Mr. Ellicott for advice as to who could tell about getting up costumes and all the other points I’ve spoken of, and he sent me to you.



“My daughter Jeannette took lessons of Mr. Ellicott for over a year, and when I told her he sent me to you, she said — now don’t blush, but she said that didn’t surprise her at all; you always was a pet pupil in that studio.”

Josie did blush as the long harangue ended. Her mind had been running over what it would involve to undertake anything of that kind. She remembered having found Jeannette Storm much more friendly than the other girls at the studio had been. She had dropped out of the class several months before, but always bowed pleasantly whenever they met. Jeannette was engaged now, and soon to be married.

As Josie hesitated in replying, Mrs. Storm added:

“All kinds of fancy things are offered for our use. Some of the dresses the girls will furnish themselves. Couldn’t you think up the subjects, you and Mr. Ellicott between you, taken, perhaps, from famous pictures?”



Oh, and Mrs. Corning, one of our prominent ladies, says she will lend her little Daffy, a beautiful little creature of six years, for a 'Cupid Midst the Flowers,' if she will only agree to stand for it."

"I know Daffy," said Josie, dimpling, "or used to, and I think she would do it for me if I coaxed her."

"Capital!" exclaimed Mrs. Storm, "and do you know Miss Gwen and Miss Do-do or Dorothy Corning? They will take part."

Josie's eyes fell. "I only decorated a Christmas tree at their house once; they've forgotten me now."

"My dear," the voice grew sympathetic, and Josie all at once thought Mrs. Storm very nice, "my dear, we never should forget each other in this world. We are all children of the same kind Father, and if we know a person once, it should be forever. I hope my Jeannette has never forgotten."

"No, no, she hasn't," Josie hastened to say.



"She always speaks to me as pleasantly as can be whenever we meet each other."

"And so should the Corning girls. But never mind, there will be several young people to take part, and the tableaux will be the same on the two evenings. The fewer the subjects, the better they will be given. Now you'll help out, I know; that's a dear."

"But I never have done anything of that kind," said Josie, her eyes big and frightened. "I'm afraid I shouldn't know how."

"Yes, yes, you will; you'll spring to it as naturally as can be. Mr. Ellicott will help with the subjects, then the way they should be dressed will come to you like a flash. And, I nearly forgot, but Mr. Ellicott said you must be in one of the pictures, by all means."

From the first moment of hearing what was wanted of her, Josie had felt within herself that she would indeed spring to it. All her artistic sense was roused, and in her young mind she already saw Daffy a sweet, half-dressed little nymph amidst the flowers.



But alas! A serpent at once crept into the garden of her thoughts. Bella Corrette would never, never submit to suggestions coming from her. And Gwendolyn Corning, — would she allow her to pin flowers or drape laces about her dainty figure? No, no!

Mrs. Storm saw the resolve settling in the young girl's face, and hurried to prevent it.

"Now don't say you can't, my dear, I beg you don't. If you knew how discouraging it was to have people refuse to help when you take the trouble to run after them, you would surely gratify me."

Truthful Josie came to the facts pointblank. She almost whispered:

"Some of the young people wouldn't let me arrange them."

"Oh, that is the hitch, is it? Very well, then, they needn't. My daughter won't refuse, and she is quite as choice and quite as good looking as any of the rest. Mr. Ellicott is to take part, so is Wilfred Corning and



Harry Sample, Archibald Fleming, and Dick Sandport. So much for the young men.

"It is my opinion that the young ladies, who certainly approve of these young gentlemen on other occasions, won't refuse to be ornamented and given attitudes by the person chosen by the committee to do the work and urged to do it. Say yes, my dear, say yes!"

"I'll try, and I'll do my very best," assented Josie.

"Now that's a good girl, and you'll do splendidly, I know you will. The rehearsals are all to be evenings, and Mr. Ellicott is going to omit two lessons in order on those days to discuss and plan about the tableaux."

Then Mrs. Storm departed, all smiles and satisfaction at having settled that part of the business.

Immediately Josie was in Dreamland. The first fond fancy was that of finding herself in company with Claude Ellicott, her ideal, planning the subjects of the tableaux. Then came visions of how she would pin and



loop and drape; perch a feather or poise a feather or bow.

At the first meeting of what was called "The Executive Committee," Josie trembled at finding herself one of a company of select, capable men and women, Claude Ellicott at her side. Together they had planned the names and subjects of five tableaux. A sixth was not quite decided upon. When they came to these, Miss Josephine Bean was called upon to read them.

The modest, picture-like girl did not once raise her eyes as she read in a clear voice:

"Picture number one: 'A Southern Beauty,' Miss Bella Corrette."

This was received with applause.

"Number two: 'A Northern Belle,' Miss Gwendolyn Corning and suitors."

Applause again.

"Number three: 'Cupid Midst the Flowers,' Little Margaret, or 'Daffy,' Corning.

Some laughing and clapping of hands.



“Number four: ‘A Coquette,’ Miss Jeannette Storm, two gallants in attendance.”

A hearty clapping of hands again.

“Number five: ‘The Sailor’s Sweetheart,’ Miss Genevieve Mellen, a sailor suitor present.”

This was applauded vigorously, and Josie’s list was complete.

Then Mr. Ellicott arose and announced the sixth and last tableau to be presented:

“‘The Gipsy Girl and the Troubadour,’ Miss Josephine Bean and Cavalier.”

This was received with the heartiest round of applause of all. The young men had purposely kept back their names who were to figure in the pictures, thinking their wigs and furbelows would disguise them to a degree, and give their friends some fun in making them out. But some waggish fellow at the meeting now sung out in sport:

“Give us the troubadour!”

“That is known to but one person,” said Claude, with a mischievous smile.



"Give us the troubadour," was laughingly repeated.

"We will on the first night of the fair," Claude replied.

"Is he selected?" cried the voice.

"Yes, sir."

"Who chose him?"

"I did!" Claude answered, in his masterful way.

But this was all a puzzle to Josie. It was the first she had heard of having been really chosen herself to figure in one of the tableaux, and she was as much in the dark as to her troubadour as any one in the hall, save the person whom Claude had said knew.

Josie did not find it all honey and balm preparing for the tableaux. As it was desired that all unnecessary expense should be avoided, that the more of what people had to give should flow into the treasury, no costumes were to be hired, except those of the young men. These must be of necessity. But



Josie made out a careful list and description of the dresses and finery wanted for the young ladies, and each one for herself bought or borrowed what was needed.

The night of the first rehearsal, Josie, who had been told to go fearlessly about her duties, was to prepare each one before the posing took place. Bella Corrette, already arrayed in fluffy muslin, was directing a maid she had brought with her to dispose bunches of artificial poppies about her dress. The disposition was not at all to Josie's liking.

But when she timidly hinted that the arrangement had better be different, Bella looked at her coolly and said they suited her, and that was all that was necessary.

Now Josie was no saint. Sweet-tempered and of even disposition as she naturally was, she had dreaded this very encounter, and to meet with defiance and cold resistance at the outset was discouraging.

"I can't do it," she said to herself, "and



—I won't! I respect myself and mean to, no matter what that girl may think."

She went to the outer dressing-room and began putting on her coat and hat. There she encountered Mrs. Storm.

"Why, why, how's this?" began that voluble lady. "Just coming? Aren't you rather late?"

"No, I'm going," said Josie. Then seeing Mrs. Storm's look of inquiry and anxiety, she added, in a voice that trembled:

"I am going home. It is just as I expected it would be. Miss Corrette wouldn't let me fix her up at all. She had some poppies put on in a way that would look ridiculously in a picture. I wouldn't want any one to think I had anything to do with such an arrangement. I felt frightened half to death to speak to her, but when I did, she looked at me so that I felt frozen, frozen all through, and she said she was satisfied, and that was all that was necessary."

"My dear," said Mrs. Storm, in a com-



manding tone, "you come right back to that dressing-room. The committee have appointed you to direct these things, and any one opposing you can drop her part at once. We can do without Mr. Corrette's cigars if it comes to that."

But Josie was not to be easily coaxed or urged.

"It will be the same all through," she said, almost crying. "Some one else must take my place. I know I am not rich," she added, pathetically, "but I cannot be spurned, especially when I am willingly doing the best I can."

Mrs. Storm, kind but determined, was about to say she did not blame her for feeling as she did, then refuse to release her, when Wilfred Corning made his appearance. Somewhat to Mrs. Storm's surprise, he greeted Josie much as one would greet a well-known friend.

"Whither away?" he asked, blithely. "I



thought you was dressing-bureau and grand fixer of parts."

Mrs. Storm, nothing loth, explained matters with exactness.

"You just prance back to the inside dressing-room," said Wilfred, taking Josie by the arm. "I'll fix things up in about two minutes, so there'll be no further trouble. Come on," he urged, with comrade-like insistence, as Josie still held back, "I'll pledge my word and honor as a gentleman of quality and a lawyer of obscurity that, if there's another disagreeable word, I'll take myself off and you with me. Now then, just try it!"

Mrs. Storm bent over with laughter. And Josie, not wishing to appear merely cross or obstinate, laid back her cloak and hat, and, in company with Wilfred Corning and Mrs. Storm, returned to the inner dressing-room.



## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE TABLEAUX

JOSIE felt relieved when, a moment later, in came little Daffy Corning with her nurse. The child had not forgotten her, for Josie had several times seen her either in stores or on the street.

Ellen came forward and asked Josie if Daffy could do her part first, as her mother wanted her to go home and to bed as soon as possible.

This was a welcome diversion.

Josie had the nurse at once take off the child's outer garments, then came the posing, injunctions only to smile, not laugh, and directions as to holding the bow and arrow.

Daffy did beautifully, entering into the spirit of the thing so obediently and gleefully



that Josie felt almost sure of her doing all right on the nights of the fair.

After that, everything went on with perfect smoothness. The girls put themselves in Josie's hands without demur, and, if they were distant in manner, she did not care for that.

Several people were in the hall to act as critics as the various tableaux were shown. The young men were not to don their picturesque garbs at rehearsals, it being entirely unnecessary, but each picture as it was shown called forth only unstinted praise.

When it had come time to arrange Bella Corrette, Josie said never a word, simply went up to her and began pinning on the rich red poppies as best suited her. Miss Bella had decided to adopt a change of manner.

"Are you sure the flowers and ribbons are all right?" she asked, blandly.

"I can't tell whether they are until I have seen you as a picture," Josie replied. "As





“JOSIE SAID NEVER A WORD, SIMPLY WENT UP TO HER  
AND BEGAN PINNING ON THE RICH RED POPPIES ”







soon as I see you on the stage, I shall know if things look as they should."

Bella laughed a little affectedly. "I reckon you are something of an artist," she said.

"I know how I want things to look," Josie replied, quietly.

She did not know just what had brought about the change in Bella's manner, although she partly guessed.

Wilfred Corning knew perfectly. He had gone up to her, being greeted as usual with one of the beauty's sweetest smiles.

"Come, Bella," he began, "you know it won't do to snub the little Bean in this affair. She has been regularly chosen to arrange and embellish the figures for the tableaux because of her great taste and her artist's eye. I found her going home, all Mrs. Storm could say. I induced her to come back, promising that she should have no more trouble."

Bella's face flushed. "You seem to have



considerable influence with the 'little Bean,' " she said, stiffly.

"I've considerable influence in wanting this affair to go through all right, now we've begun it," Wilfred replied. He waited a moment, then added:

"Perhaps, if you girls don't want Miss Josie to do anything about your dresses or fixings, I'd better tell her I'll go home with her, after all. She's a good girl, and I don't think ought to be worried. I'm not willing to see her worried, either."

The words struck a chill to the heart of haughty Bella. "He is actually for protecting her," she thought; "threatens to go home with her if she is not treated just so. No, oh, no, I can't have that! Wilfred Corning sha'n't have that excuse for seeing the girl home."

Aloud, she began jauntily: "I haven't any particular objections to having the Miss Bean fix me up, if, as you say, she has been appointed to see to the dressing and posing. I



thought she just wanted to meddle, and naturally I objected."

"But she is sensitive," persisted Wilfred, "and unless she is treated really well cannot do her best, and is too sensible to try."

"Defending her pretty warmly," said Bella, her lip curling.

"Well, I shouldn't think much of a fellow who wouldn't speak a word for a young creature who is willing to accommodate, but simply won't try under great discouragement." Wilfred spoke right manfully.

"Oh, do see Daffy!" Bella exclaimed, feeling glad to change the subject.

The curtain improvised for the rehearsals had been drawn aside, and Daffy, cutely poised and entering merrily into the fun, as she regarded it, made so lovely a Cupid that every one was delighted with her.

"The girl has talent, and no mistake," admitted Miss Bella. "It probably will be better to let her have her own way with us this once."



The first night of the fair, when the tableaux were to be presented, the hall was literally crammed. It had gone abroad that some of the wealthiest and prettiest girls of the place were to take part. Expectation was on tiptoe when the curtain was raised, and Miss Bella Corrette appeared as "A Southern Beauty."

Bella was exquisite, and a great storm of applause greeted the picture. Dressed in gauze over deep red silk, with low neck and short sleeves, her rich beauty fairly glowed midst ornamentations of the same deep red double poppies. The flowers were artificial and so easily managed.

Her dark hair fell about her shoulders, a cluster of poppies catching it away from her forehead at one side.

Poppies lay against her white neck just at the edge of the waist, were held in her hands, and fastened in clumps at her belt and on her skirt. She was looking up into an evergreen-tree, on which was a stuffed



mocking-bird, in a way to show her fine eyes, and laughing in a way to show her white, even teeth.

This was shown three times before the crowd was satisfied.

The next picture, "A Northern Belle," showed Miss Gwendolyn Corning, dressed in stiff pink silk, her hair arranged high on her head and surmounted by an enormous shell comb. A string of pearls was around her neck, the waist being cut square at the top. White roses were against her breast and a clump was held in one hand. In the other hand was a bespangled fan held idly, while she cast proud glances at two young cavaliers who approached in a fawning way. The young men were in evening dress.

This picture also pleased the throng, who insisted on seeing it again and again.

The third picture was a thing of beauty and a charm indeed. "Cupid Midst the Flowers."

Breezy little Daffy Corning did her part



faultlessly, coached and coaxed by Josie, whom she seemed still to admire. The winsome little creature appeared to have an instinctive love of posing. Her muslin skirts, ruffled to the waist, were short enough to show her snowy, dimpled knees, as, without shoes or stockings, she stood, her fair little feet midst a bed of flowers and mosses that Josie cunningly concocted with crimped green paper and artificial flowers. Mr. Rockson loaned the latter.

The child's neck and arms were without covering except for the shower of shimmering hair that fell like spun gold about her shoulders, and a narrow band covered with small flowers in place of sleeves. Flowers fastened to invisible wires surrounded her on every side, while gauzy wings deftly confined at her back spread out from her dimpled shoulders.

She was laughing gleefully, while holding gracefully a bow and arrow, aiming at a great red heart which hung illumined from a bough of the useful evergreen-tree.



There was such spontaneous, instant applause as this picture appeared that the curtain was soon dropped, as Josie feared the child would not long hold her position. But Daffy, after lowering the bow for a moment of rest, wanted the next moment to be shown again.

Not until she had been seen four times, and each time a moment or two longer than before, did the vigorous, insistent applause abate.

And then the monkey begged to pose again. She had done her part perfectly, to Josie's great delight.

Next followed "A Coquette." In this tableau, Miss Jeannette Storm appeared dressed in old style. Over a petticoat of light blue satin was puffed and looped an overdress of white brocaded silk, with a short waist cut in a low circle around the neck. Her hair, dressed in high-reaching puffs, was powdered and beautifully white. Between the puffs were loops of pearls. The sleeves came barely



to the elbows, then from them hung cascades of filmy lace. She also wore high-heeled slippers of pale blue satin with large rosettes.

This grand young mistress of "ye olden tyme" was receiving a bouquet of showy flowers with one hand from a love-sick swain, who, in tight small-clothes, blue coat with brass buttons, and high, stiff stock, was kneeling before her, while with the other hand she was slyly taking another bouquet from a second love-lorn admirer, who was kneeling behind her, being concealed from the first swain by the "ladye's" ample skirts. The beau at the rear was arrayed similarly to the one in front.

This picture elicited much laughter and applause, the amused spectators seeing it three times and then not appearing satisfied.

The fifth tableau announced was "The Sailor's Sweetheart," in which Miss Genevieve Mellen, a picturesque looking girl, with high color and strong yet sweet features, sat



reading a letter on an overturned boat supposed to be by the sea.

On her head was a small lace cap, beneath which the wanton curls were freely straying, some even lying loose on her shoulders. Her waist of sky-blue was cut square in the neck and laced over white puffings. A white skirt was looped over a blue petticoat. Large puffed sleeves of white cambric were tied with black velvet ribbon at elbows and wrists.

At a little distance, peeping from behind some rude bars, stood her sailor lover. Wilfred Corning's tall, lithe figure was unmistakable. He wore a sailor's blouse, well opened at the throat, a flat cap with ends of narrow ribbon hanging from it behind, and the regular sailor's trousers, wide at the ankles. Side-whiskers, ingeniously fastened on, ludicrously changed his looks.

Miss Genevieve's face was pleased and smiling, Wilfred's watchful and anxious.

This picture was complete of its kind, ap-



pearing exceedingly like the fine painting from which it was taken, and it did not fail to please the audience quite as much as any that had preceded it.

There was a little extra delay before the sixth and last tableau of the evening appeared, as Josie would not prepare herself until the others had been shown.

More than an ordinary degree of interest attached to this picture, owing to Claude Elliott's great popularity, for it had been freely rumored that he was to appear in it. At length it was announced:

"The Gipsy and the Troubadour." Once the curtain went up, the great company stood spellbound.

Josie had decked herself with reference to correct effect, after borrowing material freely furnished her by Madame Leroy and other friends at the store. When, with much thumping of her young heart, she found who was to be her self-appointed troubadour, she knew in that swiftly beating heart that she



would study out the very tastefulest attire procurable.

Her wealth of hair, showing its red-gold directly under the gaslight, was caught here and there by glittering silver stars. The bodice of black velvet was covered with silver spangles, and went into deep points reaching well below the waist line. This gave her a peculiarly slight figure.

A deep scarlet skirt, really made of tissue-paper and covered with silver spangles, was bunched up over a yellow petticoat also made of paper and covered with silver tinsel gracefully looped on. The petticoat reached barely to her ankles.

The gipsy's waist was low in the neck, and had merely narrow bands of scarlet ribbon with prettily twisted bows in the middle answering for sleeves. But around the white neck was a band of black velvet covered with silver spangles, and on the lower arms were the same black bands and spangles.

She wore silk stockings, which showed



plainly above the high-heeled slippers of red morocco, laced up high, and decked with red rosettes well bespangled. In one hand she held a tambourine hung around with narrow ribbons of every color of the rainbow.

Josie was smiling sufficiently to show the deep dimples in her cheeks and glimpses of her perfect teeth while standing gazing in rapt, open-eyed attention at the figure leaning against the invaluable evergreen-tree.

Claude Ellicott presented the typical troubadour in purple velvet coat, flowered silk waistcoat, knee-breeches of purple velvet, white silk hosen, high-heeled shoes with immense silver buckles, and a cape of scarlet velvet, edged with gilt fringe and lined with white satin, flung back from his shoulders.

Leaning a little forward, he was touching the strings of a guitar with white fingers, on which flashed the glint of diamonds, while falls of rich-looking lace partly covered his hands. Against his cheeks curled a dark, thick mustache.



But, appropriate and bewitching as were the costumes, it was the faces, the expressive, captivating faces, that finally fixed the attention of all observers.

Josie's eyes were full of light and admiration, and her very tambourine seemed to be listening, while Claude's was the eager, searching, anxious-to-please face of the ardent young cavalier.

Josie's beautiful face reddened perceptibly under the tumultuous applause that after one silent, breathless moment fairly shook the stage.

Four times the curtain went up on the alluring scene, and even then the unsatisfied throng clamored for still another view of the beautiful picture. But for that they must wait until the next night.

"Stunning creature!" ejaculated a young man in evening dress whose reputed wealth and generosity made him a desirable guest of the evening. "Who can I get to introduce me?"



A little later Wilfred Corning said in a low, coaxing whisper to Claude Ellicott:

“See here, Ellicott, go home just for to-night with Bella Corrette, will you, please? I want to see that Josie Bean gets home all right.”

“No, you don’t,” said Claude, with prompt decision. “I have told Miss Josie that I shall see she gets home in safety myself!”



## CHAPTER XVIII.

### LITTLE DAFFY AGAIN

“MOTHER, you must make that child obey better than she does, or I’m afraid she’ll come to harm some day. She doesn’t want to mind anybody.”

Mr. Corning, like many another father, called his wife “mother” in his own home, and, in reply to what he had just said, Mrs. Corning began:

“Yes, I know Daffy is a very wilful little thing, and I often try to make her obey, but you all pet her so that she has an idea she can do just exactly as she pleases. And the girls make such an outcry if I threaten to punish her that I know I have not been as firm as I ought.

“Ellen, her nurse, complained the other



day that in the street she was in constant fear lest the little witch would get away from her, as she would not keep hold of her hand, and she is quick as a flash in her movements. I really must make dear little Daffy mind."

It was not the first time Mrs. Corning had felt she was scarcely doing her duty by the baby of the family, but she was such a cunning, beguiling little creature it really was hard to take her wilfulness in earnest, and try to break it up.

Still another year had taken its flight. A year that, with its various interests, its work, engagements, and entertainments, had been a very full, busy one for the young people with whom we have become familiar.

Josie, sixteen and not far from seventeen, a tall maiden "very fair to see," could now trim a hat with skill, draw and paint with increasing skill, and was of importance in the great millinery establishment, although so young, next to Madame Leroy herself. She had also read quite a good deal in the year



just past, and was charmed to find how much could be learned from books. Yet at heart she was the same shy, eager, sweet-tempered, self-respecting, ambitious Josie as ever.

It was a bright, cold day, the same on which Mr. Corning had made a plea in favor of striving to make Daffy more obedient. Mrs. Corning was about to make a morning call on a friend, when Ellen, still retained as Daffy's nurse, asked if she might take the child with her down-town while she did a few errands. "She is always pretty good in the stores," the girl said.

"Very well, she can go," her mother said, "only be sure, Ellen, to keep hold of her hand in the street."

"Yes'm, I always try to," Ellen replied.

"Now you must be a good little girl," Ellen said, as she put on the child's outer garments. "You know the city's a dreadful place for children to get lost in, and if you don't keep tight hold my hand, there's no



knowin' who may snap you up and run off with you."

Daffy caught in the corner of her lip, as if she meant to make no promises, and Ellen, noticing it, said:

"Oh, now, little Miss Daffy, you'll be seein' how tight I'll clutch that little paw o' yours, and all is, if you don't behave, I won't take you out again, now you'll see."

"I'm always good in the stores," answered Daffy.

"Yes, so you are, for sure," admitted Ellen, "but it's in the street is the most danger. Are you going to mind now?" asked Ellen, hesitating about putting on Daffy's hat.

"Yes, I'll be good," said the child.

As Mrs. Corning had overheard the conversation, she thought it best not to add anything. Daffy had promised to be good, and she rather believed she would be.

The day was exceptionally fine, and the streets filled with carriages and people.

Josie, on the way to the studio, felt the



fresh, enlivening air, and noticed the stir and activity on every side.

Suddenly she heard her name called from the middle of the street. Right upon the sound came a cry of warning, and, darting a swift look around, Josie was just in time to see little Daffy Corning fall as it appeared in the wake of an automobile.

Without a moment's thought, Josie rushed into the street, and caught up the quiet child. Several persons gathered around, as the young girl with her tender burden reached the sidewalk.

But Daffy had only been stunned, and so lulled into temporary silence. As soon as she opened her eyes, looked around, and saw that she was in Josie's arms, she began screaming in the wild, persistent way of a scared and nervous child.

A druggist's near at hand offered refuge from the gathering crowd, and Josie, feeling great relief that Daffy was not killed, and had sufficient strength for such shrill crying,



went into the store. Here she succeeded in quieting the terrified little girl to a degree which reduced the screams to sobs and a quaking of the trim little frame.

All at once some one rushed into the store, and there was poor Ellen, her face drawn with excitement and terror.

"Oh, miss," she began, "I did try that hard to keep a-hold of Miss Daffy's hand, and she were a-trottin' along as good as any kitten when all to once she saw you on the opposite sidewalk, then quicker than any little cat she ketched her hand away, and made straight for the crowded street.

"You see, miss, she was that quiet I didn't gripe at her hand the way I s'pose I'd oughter. She isn't most killed, is she?"

"Oh, no, and I don't believe you were to blame a bit," said Josie, wanting to comfort the poor girl, who was in a flutter of fear and anxiety.

Poor, mischievous little Daffy still sobbed at intervals in Josie's arms, with her head laid



against the young girl's shoulder, but, when some little change of position was attempted, the child cried out with pain.

"I'm afraid she is hurt, miss," said the druggist's clerk. "I'd get her home quickly, and call a doctor."

Ellen put out her strong arms and spoke coaxingly, but no amount of urging or persuasion could lure her from Josie's arms.

"Dear me," cried Ellen, "if only the mistress wasn't out, I could have the carriage here in no time!"

Then, as a convenient thought struck her, she added, quickly:

"Oh, but I believe me I know the very house she went to call at. It isn't very fur. If I'm spry enough, I can have the mistress and the carriage both here in about ten minutes." And off she darted.

It was about fifteen minutes later that the Corning carriage stopped at the druggist's, and Mrs. Corning sprang out. Daffy had quieted entirely, and was getting drowsy when



her mother appeared. No thought of either wilfulness or blame could find place in the mother's heart now.

But the child still refused to be moved, and cried out sharply when Josie straightened herself in order to hold her more comfortably. Mrs. Corning was anxious and alarmed.

"Oh, dear, could you get into the carriage with her in your arms?" she begged of Josie. "She is in such distress the moment we try to take her away, I don't see how we can insist on taking her from you."

Josie consented to do anything she could at such a trying time, trying not to think of the lesson she would lose. On the way to the house, Mrs. Corning found out that she was on the way to the studio, and expressed her regret that the lesson must be given up.

"Oh, never mind," said Josie, brightly; "one out of so many won't make any difference."

At the house, however, Daffy still clung to Josie's neck, refusing, with all the unreason-



ableness of a hurt and still frightened child, to lie down, for fear Josie would go and leave her.

"Well, now, lie down on your soft little bed," Josie urged, "and I'll stay close beside Daffy until she is all comfy, comfy, and drops off to sleep."

"Won't go to sleep," whimpered the child. "Stay 'wake all the time if you're goin' away 'tall."

"Oh, then I'll stay forever," said the sweet-tempered girl, with a laugh that sent way in her charming dimples, and made even poor, distressed Mrs. Corning smile.

And it may be that Josie had to feel a little pleased that the dainty darling of the fine household should show for her so determined a fancy.

A telephone call had summoned the doctor, who showed a degree of anxiety on entering the house that seemed as if far in excess of what the case demanded.

"When and where did this accident hap-



pen?" he asked, hastily, and Mrs. Corning thought nervously.

On being told, he exclaimed:

"Yes, yes, and it was my auto that caused it!"

He explained: "I knew a little girl almost ran against the machine on Broad Street, but I had no idea she was knocked down until, while talking with a man at my office a few moments ago, he said, 'Doctor, I think the tail end of your carriage just escaped going over a little child a short time ago. It pushed her over as it was.'" The doctor continued:

"I was not going rapidly at the time, although hurrying home from a long visit to a patient, neither did I hear any shouts, or I assuredly should have stopped at once. But when you telephoned that your baby girl had been hurt in the street, it made my heart jump. Now let's find out how much mischief has been done. Very little, I hope."

Daffy acted as if about to scream when the



doctor took hold of her gently, but he said, with professional firmness:

“Oh, no, no! doctor can’t find out what hurts the little girl if she makes a fuss. Be a little woman now, and we’ll soon have our small lady all right, I imagine.”

He felt of arms and legs, raising them carefully up and down, Daffy keeping quiet, although there came a threatening curl of her lip.

But when the doctor put his hands under her arms, and, raising her a little, shook her slightly, the child gave a swift wail.

“As I feared,” said the doctor, “her back is injured, but I do not think seriously. The chief thing will be to keep her perfectly quiet for a few days. With your help, Mrs. Corning, we will undress her at once.”

But no; Daffy squirmed and cried, making matters worse, and her mother looked at the doctor in despair.

Josie darted forward.

“Come, come, let Josie take off this little



sleeve," she said, smiling cheerily, "then off comes the other, and my, my! the little piggy fingers must keep out of the way. Let's snap our eyes at the wicked little piggy fingers."

Daffy giggled. Hopeful sound and sign!

The doctor exchanged pleased looks with the relieved mother, as the pretty dress came off, and skirts followed.

But not all Josie's chattering and snapping of eyes could keep Daffy from making an occasional little outcry as, aided by the doctor, the clothes were nearly all removed. Then, as no bruises were visible on the plump, white back or shoulders, the ruffled night-dress was put on, and the doctor proceeded to rub the smooth little back very softly with pungent liniment; the soothing motion caused the child to grow drowsy again.

The doctor made a motion to Josie to linger.

Sleep came sweetly after the pain, excitement, and relief.

"Can you be here when Miss Daffy-Down-



Dilly awakes?" asked the doctor, with a shrug.

"I'm afraid not, on account of the store," Josie replied.

"What store?"

When it was explained what Josie meant, the doctor offered to go and explain why Josie might not return that day.

"Anything to keep the midget quiet," he said. "She will mix you up with getting hurt and then getting relieved. And with the querulousness of a sick child, will doubtless look around for you the first thing when she opens her eyes, and refuse to be comforted if you are nowhere to be seen. For two days, at least, I want her to be kept absolutely motionless if possible. You might go home at night and come back early in the morning. It seems you have the power to amuse her. I wish very much you could be near her the next two days."

"Do, my dear, do stay," said Mrs. Corn-



ing, beseechingly. "I will certainly make it all right at the store."

Josie consented to spend the next two days at Daffy's bedside, but said that, as the child would probably sleep for at least an hour, and the doctor said very likely considerably longer, she thought it would be better for her to go herself to the store and explain matters, then run home for a few minutes.

"All right, I'll take you to the store in my buggy," the doctor said. "I know Rockson, and can settle matters with him in about two minutes. But I want you on hand when our small patient awakens. I've an idea that Miss Daffy-Down-Dilly has a rumply little will of her own under her pink and white skin," and his eyes twinkled knowingly. "We must keep her placid until it is pretty certain that crying will not harm her."

As Josie left the room, Mrs. Corning followed her.

"My dear," she said, "I wish you could get leave to be absent from the store for a



week or two, and act as an extra nurse here. I would pay you almost anything."

Josie drew herself up. "I am studying to be an artist," she said.

Mrs. Corning saw her mistake, and, like a true woman, was not above recognizing it.

"Ah, excuse me," she said, "I knew you were, but I thought how lovely it would be for me, and what a help, if only I could engage you to stay with Daffy for a week or so."

"I will come and amuse Daffy for a few days," Josie said, with her usual sweetness of manner, "but I am to be an artist, and my father was a fine artist, too."



## CHAPTER XIX.

### JOSIE IS IN THE WAY

“ I DON’T care what you say, girls, she is the sweetest, prettiest, and in every way the very most lovable young creature I ever saw! You’ve picked at her until I thought it might be as well for you to know my deliberate opinion.”

So saying, Wilfred Corning flung himself out of the room and the presence of his sisters.

“ Well, has it come to this! ” exclaimed Gwendolyn, in surprise and outspoken consternation.

“ That’s what comes of encouraging poor girls who have good looks and a little talent,” said Do-do, speaking almost in a tone of awe.

Just then Mrs. Corning entered the room.



Seeing the dissatisfied, troubled looks on the faces of the two girls, she asked, cheerfully:

"What's the matter, children? I think we ought to be a very grateful, happy household, for the doctor says all danger is past, and there will be no dreadful crook in darling little Daffy's back. He thinks she will be able to walk in a short time."

"That's fine," said Gwendolyn, with heartiness, but the frown did not depart from her brow as she added:

"I only hope we have not escaped one misfortune to run directly into another."

Do-do also murmured some expression of thankfulness, but neither did her face brighten.

"Gwen, what did you mean by what you said just now?" her mother asked, looking half-amused.

"You should have been here a moment ago, mamma," Gwen replied, "and heard our brother's declaration of admiration concern-



ing the young decorator, milliner, artist, nurse, and what-not that comes to amuse Daffy every day. Do you think she need come much longer? ”

“ No, and very much relieved I can see she is that it is no longer imperative that she should. I certainly do not think you need distress yourselves in the least on her account. And I am sure I do not see what we should have done without her the past four days. The doctor says that being able to keep Daffy quiet has had much to do with averting the evil he feared. It has been remarkable the way that dear young girl has amused her, giving up everything to do so much for us all. I for one am deeply grateful to her.”

“ Well, so am I,” said Gwen. “ But seriously, mamma, do you exactly want Will to set his heart upon her? ”

“ Oh, nonsense! ” exclaimed Mrs. Corning. “ The girl is a mere child, and Wilfred doubtless regards her as such. Do be sensible, Gwen. Can’t a young fellow express liking



or even admiration for a slip of a girl without your taking such unreasonable alarm? ”

“ I think it goes deeper than you think,” persisted Gwen. “ Look how he manages to break away from the office just at the time that her fairy stories begin. And listen to the merry voices and the giggles that come from the nursery as soon as he shows his face. And she is not such a child now, either.”

“ I think it is treating Bella Corrette shamefully, too,” began Do-do, “ the way Wilfred neglects her of late. No matter how proud Bella is, I think it will break her heart utterly if Wilfred drops her, and — dear me, mamma, you must see how Will is infatuated! ”

But Mrs. Corning would not be convinced.

“ I don’t think the poor child can be very anxious to keep on coming here,” she said, “ seeing as plainly as she must that neither of you girls approve of her. I’ve done all I could to make her come. I’ve coaxed and urged and made her understand that the com-



fort of Daffy's whole future might depend on her obliging me for a time. I shall give her a handsome present one of these days to show the obligation I feel myself under to her."

"I wish she had never come here to decorate that Christmas tree," said Gwen, morosely.

"I don't wish so," said her mother. "I think many of these arrangements are beyond our direct control, and are meant to take place. We do not order our own lives, you must remember."

"We can punch off a danger," said Do-do.

Mrs. Corning laughed. "I see no danger," she said. "As to Bella Corrette, well, I don't know as I consider Bella the most desirable girl possible for Wilfred to fancy."

Both girls exclaimed at this. "Why, Mamma Corning!" Gwen went on, "you know what a perfect beauty Bella is, and think of her father's wealth and her elegant home, and, most of all, how she adores Wilfred.



And Wilfred was attentive enough to her before this Josie affair turned up."

"He went with her just as he went with some others," said the mother, calmly. "But Mr. Corrette is considered very overreaching in business affairs, and I have heard your father say he was not very much respected in business circles; and I certainly think Bella a very haughty girl."

"We girls like her," said Do-do.

"Yes, and I've no objection to your liking her," answered her mother. "Neither am I saying for a moment that I should favor especial liking for Josie Bean on Wilfred's part. I should not. But I want to be just, and justice compels me to say that I see no disposition whatever on Miss Josie's part to come here longer than is necessary, nor have I seen anything that causes me to think she cares in the least to have Wilfred linger around where she is."

"I'm afraid you're a little blind, mamma," said Gwen, with an unbelieving air.



"Yes, a little blind," echoed Do-do.

And all this time, good, patient Josie, who had learned to love clinging little Daffy, sat reading away by the gilded crib, stopping at about every page to explain something in the fairy-story that she was afraid her small listener might not understand.

Yet, comfortable as was the nursery, and eager as was the listening child, the young reader was all the time longing to get back to her usual work and studies. Then, too, the shy girl could not fail of seeing plainly that the too evident admiration of the only son of the household was far from pleasing to the sisters, who appeared to find it hard to be barely civil.

On her way home that day, Josie said to herself, with pardonable spirit: "I want no particular notice from their brother, and only wish I dared tell them so! But how he does hang around! He says things, too." She stopped muttering, and her eyes grew dreamy as she added, in the lowest of whispers:



“What a different thing it would be if Mr. Ellicott should say those things!”

Then she was at home, and sensibly tried to drive such useless thoughts away.

The next day, Josie told Mrs. Corning she could not come to the house any longer. Very heartily the good lady thanked her for what she had so kindly done. “Dear little Daffy will have to learn to do as she is told after this,” she said, “but I think she will soon yield when she finds I am in earnest about the matter.”

Josie did not tell Daffy she was not coming any more. She simply bade her good night at bedtime, and left her to the management of her mother.

But, if Josie had left the Corning house to her own mother’s great relief, she could not shake off the little attentions Wilfred was now bound to offer.

When his mother spoke with some seriousness to him one day, reminding him that it was not right to flutter around a young girl



like Josie merely to please a passing fancy, he answered in a way to cause her some annoyance.

“You owe much to your station in life, remember,” she warned, “your birth, education, and social position. Josie Bean is a good girl, and respectable in a way, but not, of course, one whom either your father or I would wish to see you become deeply interested in.”

“Mother,” began Wilfred, soberly, “I think that any young girl who will raise herself up from humble surroundings, and be determined to rise to better things, and who, through her own will, perseverance, and native talent, fits herself to rank with the best, should be encouraged in every way. And then, if she is so beautiful that any one can’t help admiring her, what is the use in trying to help it?”

Mrs. Corning took alarm at last.

Josie was good, Josie was smart, and she was undeniably a very lovely girl to look



upon. But she was not really educated; her mother was a woman almost rude in speech, and in lowly walks of life such as Wilfred knew almost nothing about. Well — she must speak to his father about it.

“But what can I do, wife?” Mr. Corning asked, when she did speak to him about it. “I no more approve of any such preference on Wilfred’s part than you do, but I don’t see just what can be done. And honestly, I have admired the child’s looks and manners myself from the first of having seen her.” He went on:

“Wilfred is headstrong, and he is of age. What is more, he never readily gives up what he has once resolved upon. An excellent trait in many respects. You remember how he mastered his Latin and Greek at the high school, although for a long time he found them so hard. And Maxwell tells me he is taking hold of the practice of the law with the same strong determination to master its difficulties.



"Well, well," he added, with a sigh, "we had better hit upon some plan for breaking up this unfortunate fancy, but we must act kindly, cautiously, and without making any attempt at coercing the lad."

But Mrs. Corning knew her boy. There was no time to be lost.

It was only the next night that she asked her husband:

"Father, how much would it cost to send young Josie Bean across the water to take up painting under some of the best teachers for six months?"

"Quite a sum, my dear."

"Couldn't you afford it?"

"Why, yes, if it was advisable."

"Very well, I want you to. I'll cut down my personal expenses if you say so."

"You needn't do that, wife. And I'm not sure but the idea is a good one."

Josie was not greatly surprised when, one Sunday afternoon, the Corning carriage



stopped before her mother's door. She concluded that Daffy had insisted on seeing her again, and in reality she was going to be sorry to go to the house again.

But when Mrs. Corning had entered and began talking to her,—she was glad her mother happened to be away,—she opened wide her eyes in innocent surprise.

“My dear,” the lady began, “how would you like to go abroad and take lessons in painting of some of the splendid artists of Europe? Some of the same ones, in fact, that Claude Ellicott studied under.”

Josie simply stared.

“You know,” Mrs. Corning went on, “we certainly should do something to show our gratitude for your kindness to our dear little Daffy after that painful accident.”

“I don't want you to,” Josie found voice to say. “Daffy was running to me when she was pushed over.”

“That makes no difference, my dear, not the least. You had nothing whatever to do



with what happened. Now wouldn't you enjoy taking these lessons? You may know that it is thought to be a great thing to cross the water and take up the study of any art under foreign masters. It doubtless would also be found of great advantage to be able to say you studied abroad, if, in time, you wished to teach painting."

"But it is so far," said Josie.

"Yes, but a lady of my acquaintance, a Mrs. Deems, it happens very fortunately, is about to visit Antwerp, in Belgium, a country of Western Europe, and is to take with her, and have under her care, three young girls, students like yourself. Now you can join this choice party if you choose, and have six months' instruction under the best masters. Do you not think it would be very nice? Thousands of young girls would jump at the chance!"

"I don't know what ma will say," Josie answered, showing no inclination to "jump at the chance."



Down deep in her heart was one very strong reason why she did not want to go. All at once she remembered her manners.

"You are very kind," she said, "and I am sure I thank you. I'll ask ma about it, and, if she says I can, I think I will go."

"Is this your mother coming?" asked Mrs. Corning, as, seated by the window, she saw a woman walking toward the front door.

"Yes, it is," said Josie.

Mrs. Corning, in pretty, ladylike speech, explained the offer she had been making. And she put things in so strong and favorable a light that Mrs. Bean said she couldn't see why Josie hadn't better make the best of so good a chance.

But, after Mrs. Corning had gone, she turned to Josie, and said, in her usual blunt, harsh way:

"Don't you see through all my lady's wonderful kindness? I do. I gave my consent to your goin' because, for one thing, I can't help seeing 'twould be a great help to you,



and for another thing, I think, as she was fair enough to own, they ought to pay you pretty well for trampoosing way up there four mortal days running, to help take care of the little girl.

“ But it’s plain to me as the nose on your face that she wants to get you out of the way of that young prig that’s been crazy to keep round you, oh, ever so long! Dates way back to that Christmas tree. And my lady’s gettin’ scared. I let you go for your own sake, but I know it’s goin’ to ease her up past all tellin’.”

So it was settled. But Josie did hate, “ past all telling,” to put an ocean between herself and her beloved teacher, Claude Ellicott.



## CHAPTER XX.

### IN SIX MONTHS

JOSIE went early to the studio on Tuesday morning, as she had a story to tell before the other pupils came. But it did not take Mr. Ellicott long to discover that her mind was far away from the easel before her.

“She is thinking of Wilfred Corning,” thought the young man, with some bitterness. “But there! I couldn’t think otherwise than kindly of Josie Bean, no matter where her thoughts might be.”

When it came, however, to Josie’s suddenly dropping her paint-brush on the floor, she gave it up and said:

“Excuse me, Mr. Ellicott, but I cannot take a lesson to-day. I must go back to the store, and — and — I’m going away!”



“Going away?” said Claude. “Well, come into the sitting-room and let us talk it over.”

He had no idea what Josie meant, but feared, from her manner, that she was about to make some permanent change. Perhaps her mother was going to move away, and, in that case, Josie would probably move with her.

But, once seated in the cosy sitting-room which was just back of the studio, Josie told the story in a few words.

Claude saw it all. Saw it clearly, as in the flash of an electric light. He knew of Daffy's mishap, had to know it, because of her demands on Josie's time. He knew of Wilfred's fascination, and thought he knew, alas! of the willing meetings that took place every day. He also swiftly guessed that the wealthy parents of the young man wished to separate them in time.

His face flushed as he realized that his best and fairest pupil was about to leave him, and



that for months he should not see her face. But, unselfish and noble at heart, Claude plucked himself up bravely to make reply.

"It is a splendid chance," he said, "a splendid chance! Make the best of it. Mr. Corning helped me when I went abroad, because of a real or fancied debt he owed my father for having assisted him when he was a young man. See what it has been worth to me. Now, he and his wife offer to help you in much the same way. I can only repeat: make the best of it."

"So willing to have me go!" inwardly sighed poor Josie.

"I shall miss my lessons here," she said, her voice trembling.

Claude noticed the quavering voice, noticed also the nervous movements of her shapely little hands.

"But you want to go, Josie?"

He had never failed of calling her *Miss* Josie before.

The girl was quick to notice the change,



also a tone of regret that had stolen into his voice.

"No," she said, her lip curling like that of a grieved child, "I don't want to go. But my poor papa once told me to do the best by myself that I could, and I've never forgotten it, and I want to obey him. Now I'm going because it will help me up, that's all."

"I suppose it will be hard at first," Claude said, trying to speak cheerfully. "You will miss your mother and your friends at the store, and the Cornings, who have been very kind to you, I know."

His voice dropped a little, as he added:

"And you and Wilfred will miss each other of course; it couldn't be otherwise."

"Ho, I sha'n't miss *him*," Josie returned, speaking with more of emphasis than she was aware, and flashing a quick look over at Claude. He was watching her with all his eyes.

"But he will miss you." Claude held his voice steadily as he spoke.



"That doesn't make any difference. He ought to keep around Miss Bella Corrette. I never wanted him to keep around me, but he just would."

Claude leaned forward.

"I shall miss you dreadfully," he said, putting out both hands.

"I don't want to go," wailed Josie, thrusting her hands into his. "I want to stay here!"

"You shall come back," said Claude, "you shall come back; and, what is more, I will come for you when the time is up. Go now, and do the best you can. But don't forget, Josie, when Madame Deems is ready to bring back her four young ladies, I will come over and see the whole company home.

"Before we take the return trip, however, we will go in parties to the large picture-galleries, and see the works of some of the great masters, 'the old masters,' as they are called. We will see them together."

Josie suddenly caught her breath.



“But Miss Gwendolyn Corning,” she gasped, “wouldn’t it make her very angry?”

Claude regarded her with an amused smile.

“As you said of her brother Wilfred just now, that will make no difference.”

“Why, I thought,” stammered Josie, “I thought —”

“You were mistaken, Josie, you were mistaken, dear; you have been the favorite pupil all along.”

A happier, more lightsome creature could not have been found on the face of the earth than was Josie Bean during the two weeks that elapsed before Madame Deems and her youthful party sailed.

Hiram’s lugubrious face was not to be lightened.

“Doesn’t matter that the whole establishment has gone into mourning,” he whined; “off goes the decorator-in-chief, as merry as



a bird, to sail the seas, for to paint and paint. Ah, me! Ah, me! Artistic decoration goes a-sailing of the sea."

Mr. Rockson, Madame Leroy, Miss Loomis, Miss Blossom, in short, as Hiram said, "the whole establishment" hated to see Josie go.

The manager gave her a lovely hat, a toque, and a steamer cap, and from the principals she received a pretty purse, containing fine proof of their kindliness of feeling and esteem.

"She is the best, most faithful child I ever saw," said Madame Leroy, wiping away a tear.

When Gwendolyn Corning heard that Josie was going abroad, she clapped her hands for joy. And for two reasons. Not only would she be out of Wilfred's way, but Claude Ellicott would not be seeing her twice every week. Not that Gwen felt there was any reason to feel at all concerned as to the last consideration, for certainly Claude had never



shown the absurd preference for the girl in any way that Wilfred had.

"Still, I would much rather have her out of the way," she softly told herself.

It was indeed remarkable that so humble a maiden should have been missed to the degree that Josie was missed throughout the great millinery house. Both store and work-room were different places without the light of Josie's bronze eyes and her cheery, winsome presence.

Wilfred Corning turned sulky. He avoided Bella Corrette, and was angry with his sister Gwendolyn because of her outspoken satisfaction at Josie's departure.

"I'll get even with Miss Gwen," he said, resentfully.

But he little guessed how he would get even with her.

One day he strolled into Claude Ellicott's studio. After they had chatted awhile on



indifferent subjects, Wilfred asked, with a smile:

“Don’t you miss the little Bean?”

“I miss her ‘more than tongue can tell,’” Claude replied, quietly.

“So do I,” promptly agreed Wilfred. “It may have been all very well sending her away,” he added, with bitterness, “but older people seem to forget that some feelings last a great deal longer than six months.

“What I felt worst about, though, Claude, between you and me, was that the girl went away not only willingly, but was light-hearted as a robin. I went to the steamer to see her off. Her dimples played in and out until the last moment. I did wish she would show a little bit of feeling.”

“I couldn’t see her off,” said Claude, still speaking quietly, as he played with a brush he had been trimming. He added in a still lower tone:

“But I’ve promised to go for her when the six months are up.”



"The dickens you have!" exclaimed Wilfred. "And you go with her leave?"

Claude's head was bent down; without lifting it, he raised his eyes, and, with the glint of a smile in them, he said:

"She will count the days, I hope, as I certainly shall until I go for her, — with her permission."

"Lucky fellow," said Wilfred; "I would like to stand in your shoes."

The time went slowly by to one person who missed Josie with a loneliness that wore on her very heart-strings. The mother learned now what Josie had been to her. The bright face, industrious habits, patient answers, all came back with vividness as the days rolled by, and no Josie, with cheery laugh and breezy bustle, came and went in the old joyous way.

"I didn't know she was such a sight of company," she sighed one day.

Then another day: "I didn't take to heart



the way I'd oughter her being such a good child; I declare I didn't!"

And still again: "When my daughter comes back, I'll speak more softly, I'll be more gentle, I'll be more loving-like, I declare I will!"

The mother said the most on a still later day, when she broke out vehemently, as if glad of the sound of her own voice in the silence:

"Always trying to lift herself up! And always lifting herself up, too, the little dear! I'll try to be like her. I'll dress more carefully. Yes, I'll try to be more like my own brave child, I declare I will!"

A resolve made in solitude to be remembered and faithfully kept afterward.

One day Wilfred Corning stood looking disconsolately out of the dining-room window. Breakfast was just over, and Gwen, who longed to bring about the old intimacy, and in an increased degree, between her brother and Bella Corrette, said, gaily:



"I suppose you're going to take Bella to the dance to-night, brother mine? She's got a splendid new gown."

"I'm not going myself," said Wilfred, shortly.

"Dear me, Will," returned Gwendolyn, speaking in a sisterly tone, more sisterly than had been her wont of late, "I do hope you're not pining for that Josie Bean. You can't go for her, you know."

"Oh, no, that's all over," said Wilfred.

"Yes, has to be for the present," Gwen replied, indulgently.

"It's over forever," said Wilfred, snapping a blade of his jack-knife into place. "Ellicott goes for her in the summer. They fixed it all up before she went away. He goes with her consent."

Wilfred did not turn and look at his sister. It was kinder that he did not. She was standing like a statue, looking past her brother into space. She was still standing gazing



beyond the window-pane when the butler came to remove the breakfast dishes.

Wilfred had got "even with Miss Gwen."

In fair old Antwerp, a beautiful young girl was going blithesomely to and from a certain studio, usually in company with three other girls as blithesome as herself. They all seemed to regard life as being a bright and abiding summer's day.

The comely middle-aged lady, who looked after them like any mother, could trust them when her eye was not actually upon them as well as when it was. Two of the girls, older than Josie, were from the homes of wealthy parents, but there was no distinction thought of amongst the congenial group. All alike were fond of the beautiful art that had taken them to the far city, and all were doing well. But Josie was doing best of all.

"It is in her blood, in her finger-tips, a natural gift that only needs training," said



the old artist, who delighted in Josie's genius, and did his best to direct and draw it out.

Yet happiness does very much toward helping on both genius and patient endeavor. And one secret of Josie's charming freshness of countenance, as well as her increasing skill with pencil, brush, and canvas, was the chime that kept ringing its sweet promise in her young heart:

"At the end of six months he is coming for me!"

"At the end of six months he is coming for me!"

THE END.























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